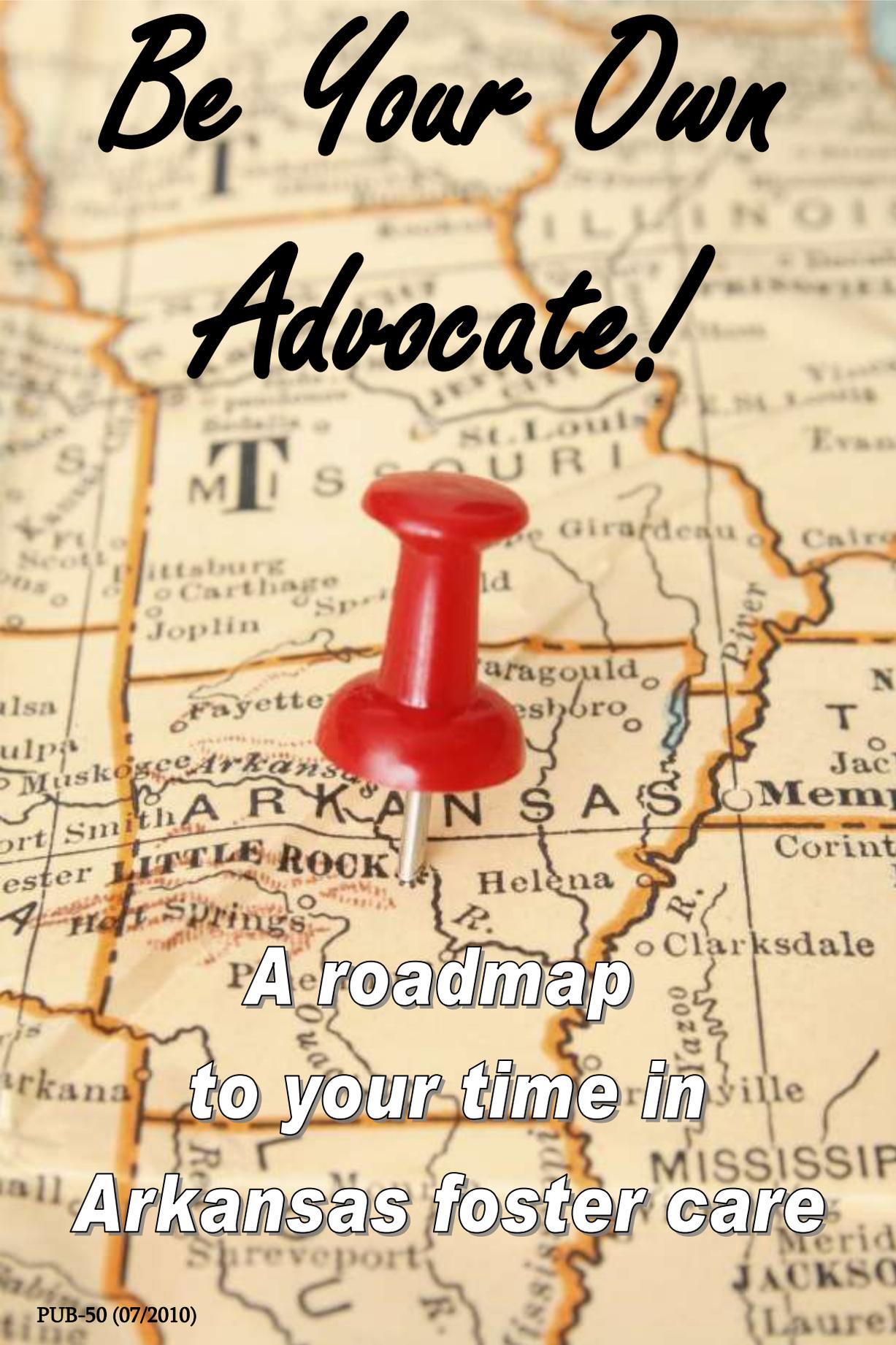


Be Your Own Advocate!



*A roadmap
to your time in
Arkansas foster care*

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Why am I here?

Being separated from your home and family is a big deal. But it's important for you to know that it's not your fault. You have the right to be healthy and safe in your home. Your parents have a responsibility to take good care of you. When this isn't happening, people from the **Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS)** (check the glossary) and the Courts will get involved to help you and your family. While you're away from your home, you will live with a temporary family who will take care of you. This is called foster care.

Is it normal to feel this way?

It can be difficult being separated from your family, moving to a new place, meeting new people, changing schools—even under the best of circumstances. You might be confused, relieved, angry, sad, scared, or you might not even know how you feel. All of these are completely natural. In fact, these are the same ways that youth all over the country say they felt on their first days in foster care, too.

If things weren't very good in your old home—if you were abused or neglected—it can be easy to feel like you somehow deserved it, or that there's something wrong with you. Nothing could be further from the truth. **You, just like everybody else, are loved and deserve to be safe and happy.**

Some of these feelings will go away, or change. Some will take longer than others to work through and figure out. The important thing is not to worry about it! Remember, you don't have to handle everything by yourself. Talking about how you're feeling can help a lot, so be sure to share what you're going through with your therapist, your caseworker, or anyone else you trust. And if you want to talk with other youth in foster care who've gone through some of the same things you have, don't forget about FosterClub.com and your Youth Advisory Board. We'll talk more about them later.

When I first entered into foster care I was five years old. I had no idea about what was going to happen or even if I was going to see my parents again. I can tell you if you're scared, it's normal and it's ok. I also want you to know that it will get better. Enjoy it as much as you can. You're only in foster care because they want to help you.

◆Alyssa, Morrilton◆

Who's here to help me?

While the reasons for your removal can be complicated, there are a lot of people who are here to help.

Your **caseworker** is the DCFS person whose job it is to look out for you. If you are placed in a different county from your “home” county, you may also have a **secondary caseworker**. Both your primary and secondary caseworkers will help you understand why you are here. Every situation is different so you should talk to your caseworker about why you are in foster care. In your first month in foster care or when you move to a new foster home, your caseworker must visit you each week. After the first month, your caseworker must visit you once a month in your foster home. Your caseworker must also contact you every week by person or by phone. He or she will work with you and your family to make a **case plan** (look in the glossary for more info). The goal of the case plan is to make your home safe and healthy again so that you can return. Sometimes, though, this isn't possible, and your caseworker will work to find another permanent family for you. This can be with a relative or someone else who will love and care for you.

Your **attorney ad litem** (AAL) is the person who will represent you in court. It is their job to make sure that your legal rights are protected. They will help you better understand your rights and the legal process.

Sometimes, you may also have a **CASA** volunteer. CASA stands for Court Appointed Special Advocate. This is a person from the community who volunteers to help you while you are in foster care. They will spend time with you and get to know you so they can help the judge understand how you feel and what you want. Every case is different, so not everyone has a CASA. But if you don't have one and you think you'd like one, be sure to ask the judge if it's possible.

You may also have a **therapist**. This person is here to listen to you and talk with you. They are specially trained to help you deal with your emotions in a healthy way.

You will also have a **Transitional Services Coordinator** who will help you with your transitional plan (which we will talk about later). It's your coordinator's job to help prepare you for life as an adult.

Young teens coming into foster care need to realize that it will be very difficult in the beginning, but I promise, it does get better. When I came into foster care I was very upset and didn't want to cooperate with anybody. But after a couple months living with my foster parents, I have grown to love them as if they were my own Mom and Dad. In my situation, I chose to stay in foster care and hopefully pursue my dreams with them, rather than live with my original parents. Teens who just arrive in foster care think it's so horrible and they'll never be happy, but if it turned out well for me, it could turn out well for anyone.

◆Rachel, Yellville◆

Where will I live?

While you are away from your family, there are different places where you might live. These are called placements.

In a **Family Foster Home**, you will live with a temporary family who will take care of you. You will have a foster mom or a foster dad or both. You may have foster brothers and sisters. You might also live in a foster home that is considered **Therapeutic Foster Care (TFC)**. TFC foster parents are specially trained to help youth who are dealing with emotional and behavioral issues.

If you have a relative who is willing and able to take care of you, you have a right to live with them. This is called a **Provisional Family Foster Home**. Tell your caseworker if you know of any relatives who might want to be your Provisional Foster Family.

When you first come into care, you might stay at an **Emergency Shelter**. These facilities care for youth on a short-term basis. You might live in a **Residential Facility**, sometimes called a **Group Home**. This is a home or facility where a number of unrelated youth live with **house parents** (check the glossary) or staff who will care for you. There are different types of group homes. Some are Christian. Some are private and some are run by the state. If you have emotional and behavioral difficulties, you may be placed in a **Residential Treatment Facility** where specially trained staff can help meet your needs.

When will I see my family?

You have the right to spend time with your parents every week unless the judge decides that it is not in your best interest. You can also write them and call them. You have a right to live with your siblings while you are in foster care. Sometimes this may not happen because either DCFS or the Courts believe that it is not in your best interest or it is not currently possible for you and all of your siblings to be placed together. In these situations, it is DCFS's job to keep trying to find a place where you and your siblings can all live together.

If you and your siblings have been placed in different homes, you have the right to spend time with them at least every other week. There are some exceptions. If your sibling has been placed in a residential treatment facility or in a different state, you may not be able to see them as often. You also have the right to spend time with other relatives such as your grandparents and great-grandparents as long as the Courts approve. Talk to your caseworker about spending time your family.

Will just anyone know I am in foster care?

No! You can tell people but this is your personal information and DCFS will protect your right to privacy. Only the people involved in your case—including school officials and medical professionals—will have access to your personal information.

What are my rights?

Be your own advocate! (Check the glossary.) The most important right you have is to know your rights. When you know your rights, you can be a stronger advocate for yourself. Speak up. Voice your concerns. Ask questions. Talk to your primary or secondary caseworker, AAL, CASA, or therapist. They are here to help you!

Your rights include...

You have the right to receive love, protection, nurturance, and support until you reach adulthood.

You have the right to live with a willing and appropriate relative.

You have the right to live with your siblings (there are some exceptions, though—look in the section *When can I see my family?*)

You have the right to be free from harm, neglect, and abuse.

You have the right to receive a quality education.

You have the right to receive physical care and medical attention.

You have the right to enjoy life with a family.

You have the right to receive constructive discipline.

You have the right to grow into an independent and self-sufficient young adult.

You have the right to appeal a change in placement and request assistance from your AAL or CASA.

You have the right to speak with your caseworker.

You have the right to be represented by legal counsel.

You have the right to choose your own religion and beliefs.

You have the right to choose your own friends and participate in activities that are important to you.

You have the right to privacy.

You have the right to be involved in your case plan.

You have the right to understand what's going on in your life.

You have the right to have a childhood and “be a kid.”

What laws protect me and other youth in foster care?

The Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) of 1997—This is a federal law that puts emphasis on the importance of the health and safety of children and youth in foster care. It also helps make it easier for children with special needs to be adopted.

Fostering Connection to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008—This is a federal law that is helping children and youth in foster care by promoting permanent families for them through relative guardianship and adoption and improving education and health care. The law also extends federal support for youth to age 21 and increases their opportunities for success when they finally leave care.

Act 391 of 2009—This is an Arkansas law that created the **Transitional Plan** which is a way for youth in foster care to be involved in planning for their future. It also allows youth to stay in care past the age of 18 if they are in an educational program or if they are employed for a certain number of hours.

Act 1311 of 2009—This is an Arkansas law that requires DHS to notify the grandparents and other relatives that a youth has been placed in foster care thus giving relatives an opportunity to be involved in the case, visit the youth, and/or have the youth live with them.

What do I do when there's a problem?

Sometimes you might get frustrated if you encounter a problem and you feel like you aren't getting what you need. Share your frustration with your primary or secondary caseworker and give them a chance to address your concerns. If the problem continues and you feel like you're not being heard, call the DCFS Client Advocate at 501.683.2735.

This is my second time back in foster care and I've been in care for a year and ten months. My first moments were scary. I didn't know what to think, where I would go, or how things were going to be. I thought I was going to be in a world where people hurt and let you down. But that's not always the case. You will be taken care of. Be more open. Speak up. Voice your opinions. It was hard for me, but I encourage you to not be scared and voice how you feel.

◆Raven, Little Rock◆

What if I need something?

Ask. Your foster family receives a monthly board payment to help meet your needs, like food, clothing, and school supplies. This also goes to providing you with an allowance. In addition, in November you will be given some extra money to buy holiday gifts for your family and friends. If you need extra money for something special like camp or a field trip, your foster parents can ask DCFS to help you pay for it. You can go to the doctor or dentist when you need to.

The most important thing to remember is that you can talk to your foster parents and caseworker about what you want or need.

Never forget yesterday, but always live for today because you never know what tomorrow can bring or what it can take away.

◆Amanda, Benton◆

Who else is here to help?

While DCFS and the Courts have an official responsibility to you, there are lots of other organizations with lots of people who can help you, too, with whatever you need.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)/www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Are you feeling desperate, alone or hopeless? Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. It's a **free, 24-hour hotline** available to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress. Your call will be routed to the nearest crisis center to you. Call for yourself or someone you care about. It's free and confidential.

National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)/ www.nvdh.org

Help is available to callers **24 hours a day, 365 days a year**. Hotline advocates are available for victims and anyone calling on their behalf to provide crisis intervention, safety planning, information and referrals to agencies in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Assistance is available in English and Spanish with access to more than 170 languages through interpreter services. If you or someone you know is frightened about something in your relationship, please call the National Domestic Violence Hotline.

National Runaway Switchboard: 1-800-RUNAWAY/www.1800runaway.org

Call if you are a teenager who is thinking of running from home, if you have a friend who has run and is looking for help, or if you are a runaway ready to go home. The **24-hour crisis line** has an experienced front-line team member ready to help you now. They provide crisis intervention and travel assistance to runaways. They provide information and local referrals to adolescents and families. They give referrals to shelters nationwide. They also relay messages to, or set up conference calls with, parents at the request of the youth.

National Youth Crisis Hotline: 800-442-HOPE (4673)

Provides counseling and referrals to local drug treatment centers, shelters, and counseling services. Responds to youth dealing with pregnancy, molestation, suicide, and child abuse. **Operates 24 hours, seven days a week.**

Boys Town/Girls Town National Hotline: 1-800-448-3000/www.boystown.org

Open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, this hotline is staffed by specially trained counselors who can help with suicide prevention, sexual abuse, parenting troubles, anger, physical abuse, school issues, chemical dependency, relationship problems, depression, emotional abuse, and runaways.

Nationwide RAINN National Rape Crisis Hotline: 800-656-4673/www.rainn.org

This nationwide partnership of more than 1,100 local rape treatment hotlines provides victims of sexual assault with free, confidential services around the clock.

BACA (Bikers Against Child Abuse): www.bacausa.com

BACA is a nonprofit organization that exists to provide aid, comfort, safety, and support for children who have been sexually, physically, and emotionally abused. BACA is dedicated to the principle that one of the basic rights of childhood is to be safe and protected. When the child's family and environment have failed them, BACA stands ready to provide it for them. BACA is a strong organization of dedicated individuals who are willing to sacrifice any and all to protect and secure a child's basic right to a happy childhood.

FosterClub

FosterClub is the national network for young people in foster care—a place to turn for advice, information, and hope.

Being placed in foster care can be a chaotic and anguishing experience for a young person. FosterClub is dedicated to providing a peer support network for children and youth in foster care. Further, FosterClub believes that the experiences young people have in foster care place them in a position to effect change within the system, inform and motivate their peers, build public awareness and create public will for improved care for abused and neglected children.

FosterClub is about providing youth a voice within the system that so heavily impacts their lives. Whether advocating on their own behalf, in concern for siblings or family members, or speaking out on behalf of their 513,000 peers currently in the system, FosterClub's websites, publications and events provide a youth-friendly network which helps the voices of young people to be heard.

FosterClub is dedicated to providing the tools, training and forum to help young people secure a brighter future for themselves and the foster care system. Join today at www.fosterclub.com!

Helpful suggestions from Toby at FosterClub

Friends. Don't lose connection! Some of the best people that I knew, I lost connections with because I don't speak to them anymore. I miss them a lot. I regret not keeping communication with some of them.

Moving. Many foster youth tend to move very often. At times they are unable to take everything they want with them on such a short notice. It really sucks that people have to think in a mind setting where they could be moved any day. But realistically, if you know you might be moving, think of the stuff that you want to take with you, wherever you may go.

School. I know that personally I moved from school to school very often. Let your voice be heard, and talk about staying in the same school district! I, on occasion, moved from school district to school district, and I was very lucky to graduate on time.

Documents. DOCUMENTS ARE VERY IMPORTANT! Your State ID, Birth Certificate, Social Security Card, etc. are very important wherever you are in life. If you have them in your possession, great! Don't lose them.

Employment. If you have a job, try to stay with it! I know personally that on many times in my life I had to quit a job because of my foster care situation. Don't bury yourself in that hole!

Keep a positive attitude! In general, life can get you down. This is especially true for foster youth and/or anyone aging out of the system. Keeping a positive attitude will make things run a bit smoother. Promise!

Youth Advisory Board (YAB)

The Arkansas Youth Advisory Board (aka YAB) is made up of a group of foster youth between the ages of 16-21 who have been in Arkansas's foster care system for any length of time. The current and former foster youth are a responsible, mature, and respectful group of youth who represent your wants, goals, and needs.

Our goal is to better the foster care system as a whole in the State of Arkansas. We advocate, mentor, and represent youth in foster care not only in Arkansas, but also on a national level.

A board member will be available to talk to you upon your request—just ask your transitional services coordinator. Anything said to a board member is strictly confidential unless it is going to harm you or someone else. If the board member feels that what you have shared would benefit you, he or she may ask your permission to share it with your coordinator.

If you would like to know more about the Youth Advisory Board, or you would like to know more about how you can get involved just ask your case worker or your coordinator.

What are DCFS's responsibilities to me?

It's DCFS's job to:

1. Find the best place for you to live while you are in foster care. This means finding a family foster home, relative foster home, or other care facility that best meets your needs in the least restrictive environment and is close to your family to make it easier to stay in contact (as long as you can still be safe).
2. Make sure you have planned, regular visits with your family and relatives.
3. Provide you with the opportunity to practice your faith and participate in the religious activities of your choice.
4. Give you honest information regarding your case and any DCFS or Court decision affecting you.
5. Protect your rights (check out the section *What are my rights?*).
6. Involve you in your case planning, conferences, staffings, and court hearings whenever possible.
7. Keep a record of your legal documents such as birth certificate, social security card, and court orders for you while you're in care.
8. Communicate with your school about what's going on in your life to make sure you're getting what you need while you're in school.
9. Help you return to your family if it is in your best interest or find a new family with relatives or adoptive parents if you cannot safely return home.
10. Support you as you grow up, and help you learn skills you need to live a productive and satisfying life.

What are DCFS's responsibilities to my bio-family?

1. Offer and provide services that will help keep your family together.
2. Let you and your parents know why it was necessary to temporarily move you and place you with a foster family.
3. Not judge or criticize your family. Acknowledge that your family is part of your life.
4. Let your family know how they can still be involved in your life while you are in foster care.
5. Let your family know what they must do to have you return home.
6. Include your family when creating the case plan.
7. Give your family every possible support and service for achieving the goals of your case plan to help you return home.
8. Return you to your family if and when the necessary changes or conditions required by the court have been made.

What responsibilities does my bio-family have?

1. Provide any and all important information about you and your family to DCFS.
2. Tell your caseworker about any special needs you have, including health conditions, school information, and important family customs or cultural practices.
3. Participate in staffings and court hearings.
4. Work with your caseworker to create a plan that will help you return home.
5. Participate in the services to support the case plan goals and work on achieving the goals.
6. Be involved, as often as possible, in your medical appointments or social or religious activities.
7. Keep in contact with your caseworker and keep them updated on what they are doing to achieve the goals of the case plan.
8. Maintain contact and communication with you and keep appointments to visit with you.
9. Talk to your caseworker or lawyer if they have any concerns.
10. Provide financial support for you. The court will decide how much they need to pay.
11. Let DCFS know as soon as possible if they wish to give up their rights as a parent and end their relationship with you.

Some tips to help you through foster care...

Be calm and respectful. It will pay off!

Know that you are not alone!

Find out who your case worker is and get his or her contact info.

Be patient and try to ask lots of questions.

Try to be positive and be very honest!

◆Shady, Fort Smith◆

Court Process

Because the Court makes most of the decisions regarding you and your family, it is important that you understand the court process, which will include multiple court hearings. If, at any time, you have questions regarding the court process, talk to your caseworker, AAL, or CASA.

Reports and Investigation – The Arkansas State Police (ASP) investigate all reports of severe maltreatment and are required by law to initiate these investigations within 24 hours of receiving a report. Severe maltreatment includes things such as sexual abuse, broken bones, and internal injuries. DCFS investigates all other types of maltreatment reports and must do so within 72 hours.

Emergency Removal – DCFS and ASP have the right to remove a youth from his or her home for up to 72 hours without notifying the parents if they believe the youth's health or safety are at risk. Most emergency removals occur as a result of a report to the Child Abuse Hotline. During this time, a youth will stay with a foster family.

Emergency (Probable Cause) Hearing – The emergency hearing must be held within five working days after an emergency removal to determine if DCFS or ASP acted correctly in removing the youth.

Adjudication Hearing (Trial) – The adjudication hearing is held within 30 days after the probable cause hearing unless the court finds good cause to extend the hearing for an additional 30 days. The purpose of the adjudication hearing is for the judge to determine whether the allegations are substantiated by the proof (found true). In order to be found true, DHS/DCFS must prove that, due to parental unfitness or child maltreatment, the youth is at great risk for serious harm.

Disposition Hearing – The disposition hearing usually occurs immediately after the adjudication hearing if the judge has determined the youth **dependent-neglected** (see glossary). The purpose of the disposition hearing is to determine what action will be taken. The judge will determine whether it is safe for a youth to return home or whether the youth must remain under the care of DHS/DCFS. The judge will also order services to reunify and/or preserve the family. If the court determines a youth must remain away from home, the court will approve a plan for the youth and parents to visit each other as well as a plan to help the youth safely return home.

Review Hearings – The first review hearing must be held within six months of the emergency removal. Review hearings must be held every six months for as long as the youth is in care. The purpose of a review hearing is for the judge to reexamine the situation, determine whether the court orders and approved plan are being followed, and determine whether each party is working to achieve the goals of the plan.

Permanency Planning Hearing – The permanency planning hearing must be held no later than 12 months from the emergency removal. The purpose is for the judge to decide where the youth should permanently live. These options may include 1) Return the youth to his or her family, 2) Continue working on the plan to return the youth to his or her family 3) Approve a plan to terminate the parental rights of the parents, 4) Approve a plan to allow the youth to be adopted.

Termination of Parental Rights – Termination of parental rights (TPR) can be voluntary or court-ordered. TPR is a permanent, legal action in which a parent gives up all rights and responsibilities and ends the relationship with his or her child. After TPR, another family can adopt the youth.

Transition

If you enter foster care when you turn 14 or if you come into care after the age of 14, DCFS will give you an opportunity to be actively involved in planning for your future. Your caseworker will help you complete a **Transitional Plan** and a **Life Plan**. He or she will also help you develop and maintain healthy relationships with adults you trust who will be a resource to you after you leave foster care.

What is a Transitional Plan?

The Transitional Plan includes all the **life skills** (check the glossary), resources, and future-planning for your successful transition into a self-sufficient life. It is a way for you to be involved in planning for your future. There are a lot of parts to your transitional plan. It will include plans about your **education, employment, health, housing, and lifelong connections** as well as other things.

As part of your transitional plan, your caseworker will help you get your **credit report**. You are entitled to a free credit report every year from each of the three national credit reporting companies (Experian, TransUnion, Equifax). You can access your credit report by going to www.annualcreditreport.com. This is the **only** website where you can get your report for **free!**

Your caseworker will also help you get the life skills training you need, complete an application for health insurance, apply to a college or vocational program, and apply for financial aid. (Check out the section on the **Arkansas ETV Program**.)

You will also create a **Life Plan** which is a detailed to-do list that you will make along with your caseworker, AAL, foster parents, transitional services coordinator, and anyone else who is important to you such as teachers, **mentors** (check the glossary), coaches, etc. It will include the goals you have and the activities you will complete in the areas of education, employment, health, housing, and lifelong connections.

If you are 14-18, you will take something called the **Ansell-Casey Assessment** (more info in the Glossary) that will help determine what kinds of life-skills classes would be most helpful to you. In addition to the life skills training, you may also receive tutoring and other services.

After-Care Services

You may choose to stay in care past the age of 18 (until you are 21) if you are enrolled in college or a vocational program or if you are working at least eighty hours a month toward gaining self-sufficiency. If you choose to stay in care, you may receive help to pay for room and board, start-up assistance, and life skills classes. You should strongly consider staying in care until you are 21. Otherwise you could be missing out on major benefits such as money to help you pay for housing, college, health care, transportation, and more.

Lifelong Connections and Permanence

Placement in foster care is meant to be a temporary solution. At some point you will no longer be in foster care. You might reunite with your family. You might get a **legal guardian** (check the glossary). You might be adopted by a relative or another family who will love you. Or you might “**age out**” (check the glossary) of foster care at age 18 or 21. No matter what your situation is, it is important that you develop meaningful relationships with caring adults that will last a lifetime. These lifelong connections are called **permanence** (check the glossary).

Getting adopted or getting a legal guardian does not mean that you are losing your original family. It means you are gaining more family. You can have a safe and permanent adoptive family and keep connections to past families who are important to you.

Take time to think about who is important to you and who you want to be in your life forever—even after you leave foster care. Your caseworker can help you get connected and stay connected with the important people in your life.

Consider asking an adult you trust to adopt you. You might think you don’t want to be adopted now, but having someone you are permanently and legally connected to will become more important as you get older. It’s never too late to be adopted!

Look at the questions listed below and see just a few of the reasons why having supportive, caring adults in your life is important!

- ◆ Where will you go for the holidays?
- ◆ Where will you do laundry?
- ◆ Who will you turn to for health and legal advice?
- ◆ Who will you talk to about your problems?
- ◆ Who will you call in an emergency? Where will you stay if you have an emergency?
- ◆ Who will make medical decisions for you if you become sick or seriously injured?
- ◆ When you have children, who will they call grandma and grandpa?

Talk to your caseworker if you have more questions about lifelong connections and permanency.

Don’t ever forget how important you are! Remember to always speak up, ask questions, and

BE YOUR OWN ADVOCATE!

Never forget yourself. Never forget that you are somebody and that you matter.
Never forget that a future lies ahead better and brighter than the past. Never forget that the world can be yours and happiness waits for you to take it.

◆Andrew Bridge, former youth in foster care, and author of *Hope’s Boy*◆

Arkansas ETV Program

The Education Training Voucher (ETV) program awards grants to current and former foster youth to help pay for college or vocational training programs. ETV grants are funded by the federal government and administered by the states. Students may receive up to \$5,000 a year based on their cost of attendance.

What are the Eligibility Requirements?

1. You must be a current or former foster student who:
 - was in foster care on your 18th birthday and aged out at that time. OR
 - was adopted from foster care with the adoption finalized AFTER your 16th birthday. OR
 - remains in foster care and have completed a secondary education. OR
 - will have your foster care case closed between the ages of 18 and 21.
2. You must be a U.S. citizen or qualified non-citizen.
3. Your personal assets (bank account, car, home, etc.) are worth less than \$10,000.
4. You must be at least 18 but younger than 21 to apply for the first time. You may reapply for ETV funds, if you have a current grant, up to the age of 23.
5. You must have been accepted into or be enrolled in a degree, certificate, or other accredited program at a college, university, technical, vocational school. To remain eligible for ETV funding, you must show progress toward a degree or certificate.

How do I use the funds?

Funds can be used to pay for tuition, balances due at school, on-campus room and board, meal cards, books and school supplies (such as uniforms, tools, equipment), one computer package, federal student loans, and study abroad through qualifying schools.

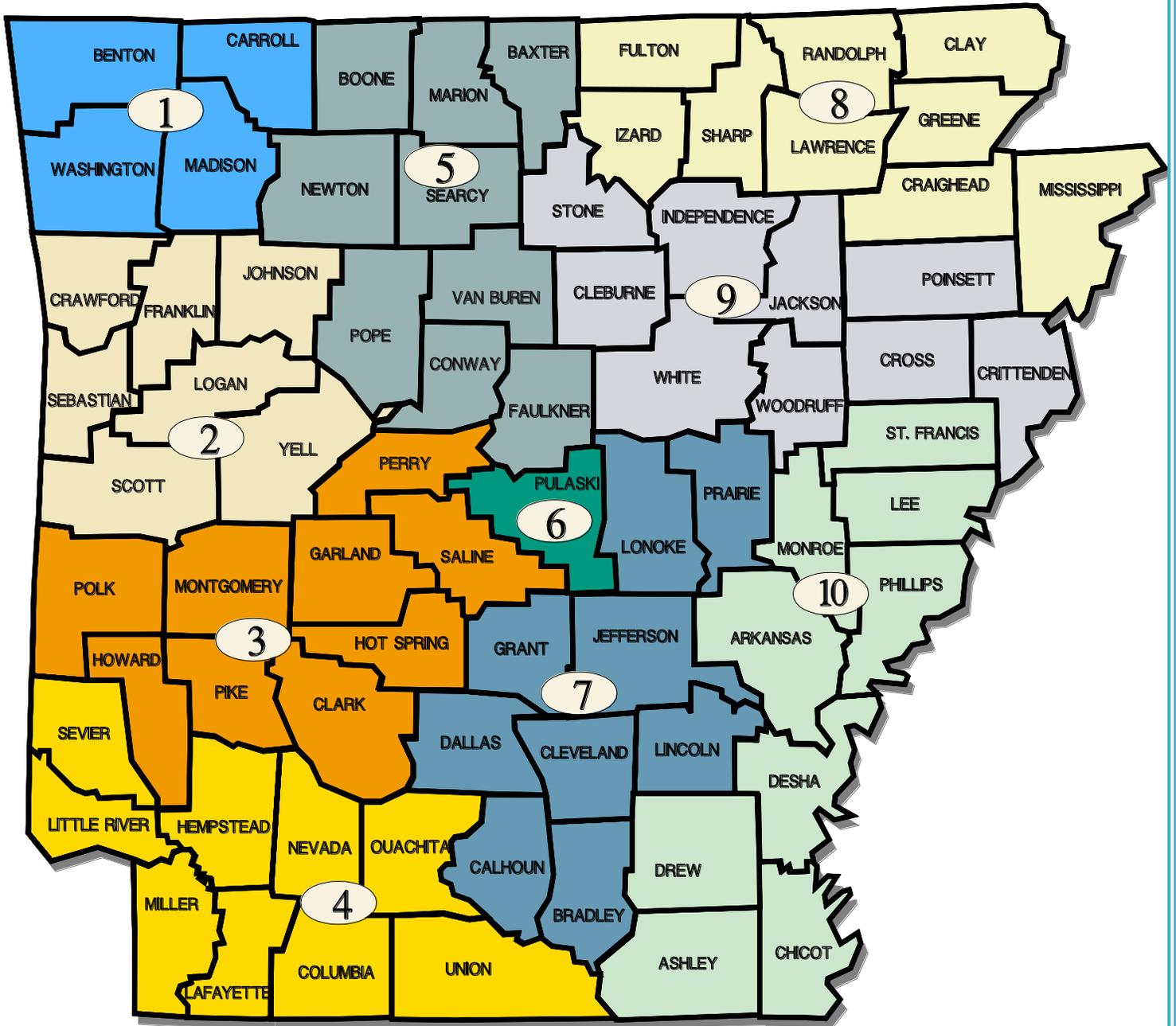
Once the above expenses have been addressed, ETV funds can pay for other items, including rent, food, transportation, health insurance premiums, disability services, and dependent child care expenses to licensed child care providers.

Funds may not be used for educational or vocational courses shorter than one year in duration and/or which do not lead to a degree or certification, coursework at non Title-IV schools, cell phone bills, personal loan repayments, banking late fees, bounced check fees or lost/stolen debit card transactions, computer games or DVDs , and dorm room or apartment damages.

If you have any other questions about the ETV program, please email Arkansas@statevoucher.org

To apply, go to www.statevoucher.org, click on Arkansas, and follow the instructions.

Area Map



Area 1 County Supervisors:

Benton: 479-273-9011
Carroll: 870-423-3351
Madison: 479-738-2161
Washington: 479-521-1270

Area 2 County Supervisors:

Crawford: 479-474-7595
Franklin: 479-667-2379
Johnson: 479-754-2355
Logan: 479-963-2783
Scott: 479-637-4141
Sebastian: 479-782-4555
Yell: 479-495-2723

Area 3 County Supervisors:

Clark: 870-246-9886
Garland: 501-321-2583
Hot Spring: 501-332-2718
Howard: 870-845-4334
Montgomery: 870-867-3184
Perry: 501-889-5105
Pike: 870-285-3111
Polk: 479-394-3100
Saline: 501-315-1600

Area 4 County Supervisors:

Columbia: 870-234-4190
Hempstead: 870-777-8656
Lafayette: 870-921-4283
Little River: 870-898-5155
Miller: 870-773-0563
Nevada: 870-887-6626
Ouachita: 870-836-2591
Sevier: 870-642-2623
Union: 870-862-6631

Area 5 County Supervisors:

Baxter: 870-425-6011
Boone: 870-741-6107
Conway: 501-354-2418
Faulkner: 501-730-9900
Marion: 870-446-2237
Newton: 870-446-2237
Pope: 479-968-5596
Searcy: 870-448-3153
Van Buren: 501-745-4192

Area 6 Supervisors:

Pulaski South: 501-682-9330
Pulaski North: 501-682-0141
Pulaski Southwest: 501-371-1121
Pulaski East: 501-371-1309
Pulaski Jacksonville: 501-371-1260

Area 7 County Supervisors:

Bradley: 870-226-5879
Calhoun: 870-798-4201
Cleveland: 870-325-6218
Dallas: 870-352-5115
Grant: 870-942-5151
Jefferson: 870-534-4200
Lincoln: 870-628-4105
Lonoke: 501-676-3113
Prairie: 870-998-2581

Area 8 County Supervisors:

Clay: 870-598-2282
Craighead: 870-972-1732
Fulton: 870-895-3309
Greene: 870-236-8723
Izard: 870-368-4318
Lawrence: 870-886-2408
Mississippi: 870-763-7093
Randolph: 870-886-2408
Sharp: 870-856-1053

Area 9 County Supervisors:

Cleburne: 501-362-3298
Crittenden: 870-732-5170
Cross: 870-238-8553
Independence: 870-698-1876
Jackson: 870-523-9828
Poinsett: 870-578-5491
Stone: 870-269-4321
White: 501-268-8696
Woodruff: 870-347-2537

Area 10 County Supervisors:

Arkansas: 870-946-4519
Ashley: 870-853-9816
Chicot: 870-265-3821
Desha: 870-222-4144
Drew: 870-367-6835
Lee: 870-295-2597
Monroe: 870-747-3329
Phillips: 870-338-8391
St. Francis: 870-633-1242

Glossary

Aging Out—When a youth leaves foster care because they turn a certain age, usually 18 or 21. Aging out usually results in loss of support from the state for things such as foster care payments, housing, living costs, and health services. Consider staying in care as long as possible so you can receive these important benefits!

Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment—This is a test that all youth in foster care ages 14 and older will take to help evaluate their life skills in the following nine areas: career planning, communication, daily living, home life, housing and money management, self care, social relationships, work life, and work and study skills. Youth will take the test every six months to see what progress they have made. When youth get a high enough grade to show that they have the necessary life skills, they no longer have to take the test.

Advocate—A person who speaks up on behalf of themselves or someone else in an effort to ensure that their rights are protected and/or to gain services or other benefits.

Case Plan—This is a written plan that a youth and his or her family along with foster parents, caseworker, and AAL will make. The goal of a case plan is to help find a permanent placement for a youth, either with bio-parents or someone else who will love and care for the youth.

DCFS—The Division of Children & Family Services is the state agency whose job is to keep children and youth safe. DCFS is just one of 10 divisions within the Department of Human Services.

DHS—The Department of Human Services is the bigger agency of which DCFS is a part. In addition to DCFS, DHS includes the following divisions: Aging & Adult Services (DAAS), Behavioral Health Services (DBHS), Child Care & Early Childhood Education (DCCECE), County Operations (DCO), Developmental Disabilities Services (DDS), Medical Services (DMS), Services for the Blind (DSB), Youth Services (DYS), and Volunteerism (DOV).

Dependency-Neglect—When a child or youth is at substantial risk of harm as a result of the following: abandonment, abuse, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, neglect or parental unfitness or being present in a dwelling or structure during the manufacture of methamphetamine with the knowledge of a parent, guardian, or custodian.

House Parents—People who supervise and provide care to young people in a group home or residential facility.

Life Skills—Important abilities and skills for a young person to possess so they can successfully transition to adulthood. These include skills and knowledge about taking care of daily life, relationships, employment, housing and home life, money management, health and self care.

Legal Guardianship—Placement with a person who is charged with the legal responsibility for the care and management of a child or youth. A legal guardian will be under the supervision of the court and will be required to appear in court to give periodic reports about the youth's status.

Mentor—Somebody, usually older and with more experience, who provides advice and support to a young person.

Permanence—For a child or youth in foster care, to have an enduring family-like relationship that is safe and meant to last a lifetime.

Who can I contact?

Who is my **Primary Caseworker**? _____

Phone _____

Who is my **Secondary Caseworker**? _____

Phone _____

Who is my **attorney ad litem (AAL)**? _____

Phone _____

Who is my **CASA worker**? _____

Phone _____

Who is my **therapist**? _____

Phone _____

Who is my **County Supervisor**? _____

Phone _____

Who is my **Area Director**? _____

Phone _____



“YOU ARE NOT ALONE”

(A guide to living in foster care)



Foster Care “What’s Up”

“Foster care is only what you make it.”

Charlotte U.

This handbook was created by the Youth Advisory Board (YAB) and the Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS).

RESCIND

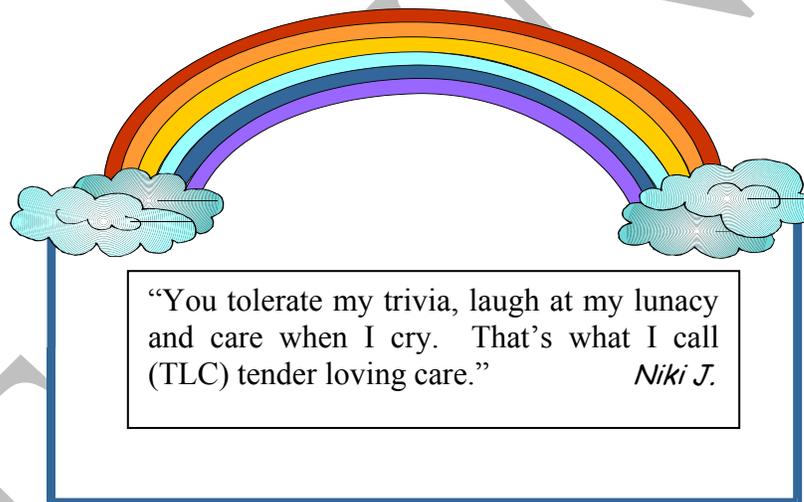
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What's Up about Foster Care

1. Foster care provides a substitute family life for a child who needs care for a short or long period of time. The child will be placed in a home approved by the Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) or in a licensed facility.
2. The goal of foster care is to work toward a permanent placement for the child, preferably, return to the birth/legal parents.
3. Foster care is a team effort involving DCFS, the family foster parents, the foster child and the birth/legal parents.

This handbook is developed to provide the child with information he/she will need while in foster care. This book is only a reference guide. Contact the Foster parent or DCFS for any questions or further explanations.



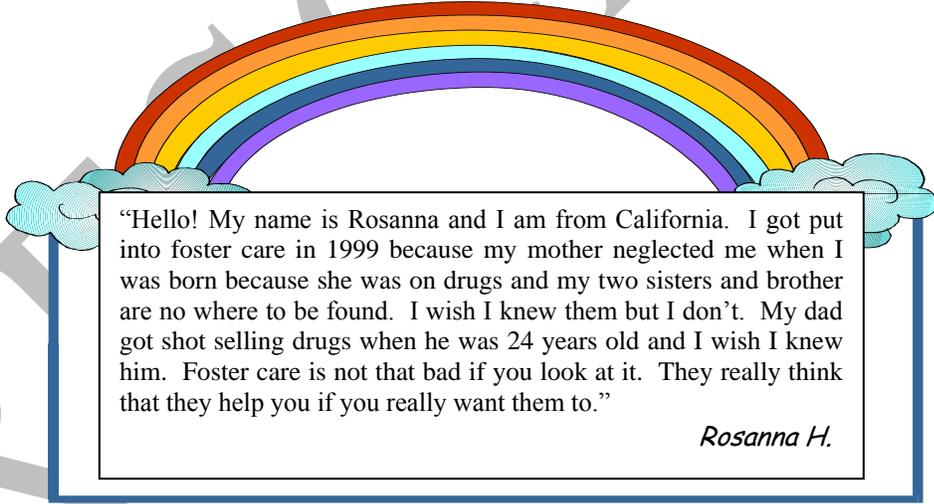
Why a Child is Placed in Care

A child is in foster care because the birth/legal family does not function well due to social, emotional, economic and/or physical reason, or does not exist. Foster care provides a safe place for the child while the conditions, which caused the placement away from home, are cleared up. DCFS has legal custody of all children placed in foster care.

When a youth is placed in foster care, he/she has been determined by the court as being a:

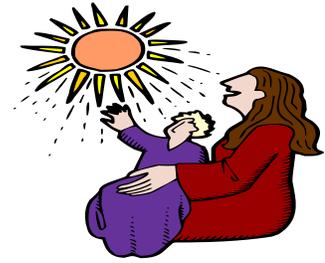
- Dependent Neglected Juvenile - any child who (as a result of being abandoned, abused, or neglected), is at substantial risk of serious harm, or
- Dependent Juvenile - a child whose parent is under the age of eighteen (18) and is in the custody of the Department of Human Services. A dependent juvenile can also be an infant given up for adoption or a child whose parent or guardian is incapacitated, died or incarcerated, or
- Family In Need of Services (FINS) - if a child is habitually disobedient to reasonable and lawful commands of his parents, the family may be adjudicated as a Family In Need of Services. If it is necessary to protect the health and safety of the child, a FINS case can result in a child being placed in foster care.

The court is the only one that can order that a child be placed in foster care, and also must issue a court order for DCFS to close any foster care case.



“Hello! My name is Rosanna and I am from California. I got put into foster care in 1999 because my mother neglected me when I was born because she was on drugs and my two sisters and brother are no where to be found. I wish I knew them but I don't. My dad got shot selling drugs when he was 24 years old and I wish I knew him. Foster care is not that bad if you look at it. They really think that they help you if you really want them to.”

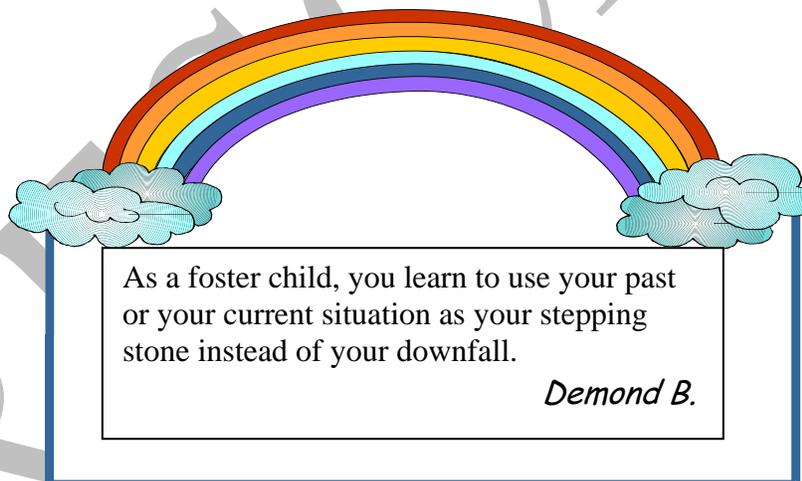
Rosanna H.



Placement Options for Youth in Care

There are four options for placing a child who is in the custody of DHS.

1. Family foster home - An approved private residence of one or more family members who cares for a child who is in DHS custody.
2. Kinship care foster home - An approved private residence of one or more family members who are related to the child who is in DHS custody.
3. A licensed facility.
4. Adoption



Visitation Policy

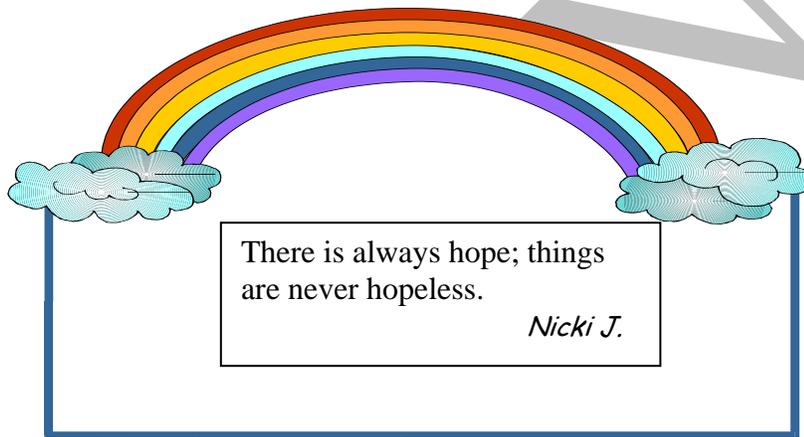
Parent/Child Visitation

Unless the courts orders otherwise, a child in foster care will have weekly visits with their parents. If the child objects to visits with the parents, then the visits may be stopped.

A child can write and/or telephone their parents, also.

Siblings (brothers and sisters of a child) Visitation

Siblings visits shall take place at least once every two weeks, unless it is not in the best interest of the child or a situation exists where it is not possible for visits to take place every two weeks, for example, a sibling lives in another state or a sibling is institutionalized. In these situations a visitation schedule will be developed as appropriate to meet the family's needs.



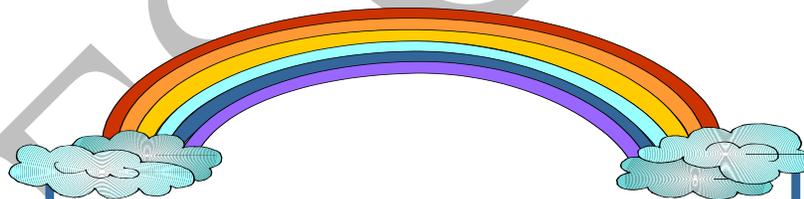
Rights of the Child

Children have the right to:

- Live with their birth/legal family, if appropriate,
- Receive love, protection and support until they are grown up,
- Be free from harm, neglect and abuse,
- Receive an education,
- Have physical care and medical attention,
- Enjoy family life,
- Receive discipline,
- Receive religious and moral training,
- Grow into independent adults,
- Appeal a change in placement and request assistance from the Attorney ad litem,
- Speak with your worker as needed,
- A private conversation, if age-appropriate, during the weekly visits with the Family Service Worker to discuss the quality of care being provided to the child.

When the right to live with the child's own birth/legal family is in jeopardy, the child has the right to:

- Be represented by legal counsel;
- Have their legal rights protected in any judicial procedure for custody or guardianship.



If you don't stand up for yourself, no one else will.
Golden Rule

Niki J.

Responsibilities Of

1. DCFS to the child are:

- To place the child in a family foster home, kinship (relative) foster home, or other substitute care facility that can best serve the child's needs;
- To place the child close to birth/legal parents to allow frequent contact;
- To have regular visits for the child with birth/legal parents, siblings, and others with whom there is a significant relationship, unless restricted by court order;
- To have a weekly visit with the child in the foster home and include a private conversation with the age-appropriate child to assess the quality of care being provided;
- To give the child honest information regarding all decisions;
- To allow the child to participate in case planning, conferences, staffing, and court hearings, whenever possible and age appropriate, to assure services are provided to meet the child's needs.
- To keep a record for each child that includes legal documents (for example, birth certificate, Social Security card, court orders);
- To help the child return to the birth/legal parents' home at the earliest possible time or to be legally freed to form new family ties with relatives or adoptive parents; and
- To prepare the child for independence.

2. DCFS to the birth/legal parents are:

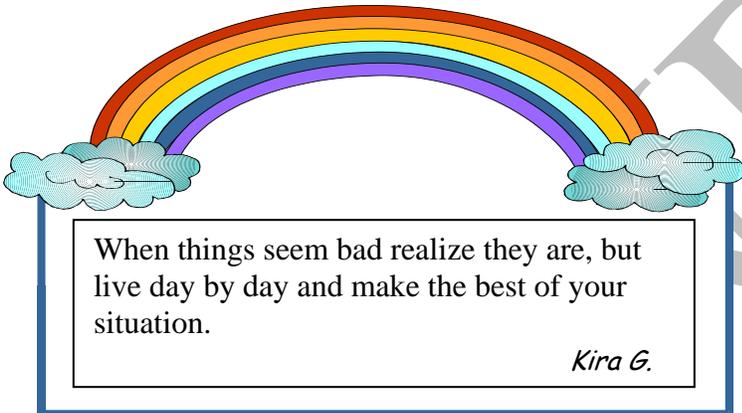
- To offer and provide services to avoid foster care if at all possible;
- To inform the birth/legal parents of the reason for removing the child if foster care is necessary;
- To advise birth/legal parents what conditions must be met in order to have the child returned to the home;
- To return the child to the parent's home when the necessary changes or conditions required by the court or DCFS have been made and the circumstances that caused the child to be removed from the home have been eliminated.

3. Birth/legal parents are:

- To participate in staffings and court hearings;
- To keep appointments for visits and returning calls;
- To help develop the case plan;
- To make necessary changes or correct conditions which prevents the child from returning home;
- To provide financial support for the child. The court will determine the amount of child support the parents should pay.

Complaint Process for the Youth

To resolve a complaint, the child should ask for a discussion of the problem with your Family Service Worker. If the problem is not solved, the child may ask to speak with the County Office Supervisor for guidance.



RESOURCES

Money to Foster Parents

Foster care maintenance payments for a child in foster care may cover the costs of (and the cost of providing) food, clothing, shelter, daily supervision, school supplies, a child's personal incidentals, liability insurance with respect to the child, and reasonable travel to the child's home for visitation with family or other caretakers. The amount of the child's allowance is decided by the foster parent, based on the child's age.

Foster parents shall receive a monthly board rate according to the following chart; these rates are effective for board payments of November 2009 and after:

Birth through 5 years	\$ <u>410.00</u> Monthly
Board and Care	<u>350.00</u>
Clothing	<u>45.00</u>
Personal Needs	15.00
6 through 11 years	\$ <u>440.00</u> Monthly
Board and Care	<u>365.00</u>
Clothing	<u>50.00</u>
School and Personal Needs	25.00
12 through 14 years	\$ <u>475.00</u> Monthly
Board and Care	<u>380.00</u>
Clothing	<u>60.00</u>
School and Personal Needs	30.00
15 through 17* years	\$ <u>500.00</u> Monthly
Board and Care	<u>395.00</u>
Clothing	<u>70.00</u>
School and Personal Needs	35.00

*Refer to Policy VIII-B for requirements to continue board payments for youth age 18-20 (board payments must end the day the youth elects to leave foster care or the end of the month of his 21st birthday).

How DCFS is Set UP

Children and Family Services (CFS) is the Division within the Department of Human Services (DHS) that is responsible for child welfare programs. These programs include child protection, family preservation, foster care, adoptions, Interstate Compact on Placement of Children, Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance and Child Welfare Agency Licensing.

The Director of the Department of Human Services appoints the DCFS Director. The DCFS Director has an Executive Staff, which consists of four (4) Assistant Directors over program and administrative offices.

Direct and contract services are provided through the Office of Community Services. The state is divided into ten (10) multi-county or multi-office areas, each of which is managed by an Area Manager. The Area Manager oversees the County Supervisors, who each manage one county with one or more county offices. The Area Manager also supervises some area-wide staff that delivers services or support across the entire Area.

Three other DCFS Offices support the Office of Community Services:

- The Office of Finance and Administrative Support is organized into the following units - Personnel, Financial Support, Contracts Management, and Medicaid & IV-E Eligibility.
- The Office of Community Support consisting of the following units - Foster Care, Adoptions, Behavioral Treatment, Independent Living, Interstate Compact (ICPC), CAPTA and Central Registry.
- The Office of Legislative Analysis, Research and Planning consisting of the Policy Unit, Planning Unit, Quality Assurance Unit, Training / Professional Development Unit, Child Welfare Agency Licensing and COA Accreditation.

Foster Care Services are provided by Family Service Worker (FSW) Trainees, FSW Workers, and FSW Specialists along with FSW Supervisors who monitor the everyday activities of the foster children.

County and area staff are responsible for weekly visits to the foster homes, monthly visits to the residential facilities and therapeutic foster homes, medical appointments, providing transportation to foster children and parents, and ensuring all educational, mental, health and emotional needs are being met. County and area staff are responsible for case planning, staffings, attending court hearing, helping families with housing, transportation, cash assistance, visitation between parents and sibling visits, and Family Preservation Services. County and area staff are also responsible for making referrals for child care services, Intensive Family Services, respite care, health assessments, and Therapeutic Foster Home and group home referrals.

Don't Quit

When things go wrong
as they sometimes will,
When the road you're
trudging seems all uphill.

When the funds are low,
and the debts are high,
And you want to smile,
but you have to sigh.

When care is pressing
you down a bit-
Rest if you must
but don't you quit.

Success is failure
turned inside out,
The silver tint of
the clouds of doubt.

And you never can tell
how close you are
it may be near when
it seems afar.

So, stick to the fight
when you're hardest hit-
It is when things go wrong
That you mustn't quit.

Submitted by Cindy W.

**DIVISION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
STAFF DIRECTORY**

DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES(501) 682-8772

Assistant Director, Office of Community Services ..(501) 682-8771

Assistant Director, Office of Community Support 501) 682-8541

Administrator, Program Support In-Home Services (501) 682-8992

Field Representative	(501) 682-8439
Program Coordinator	(501) 682-2447
Manager, Central Registry	(501) 682-0404
Manager, Interstate Compact	(501) 682-0402

Administrator, Program Support Out of Home Services (501) 682-8440

Manager, Adoption Services Unit	(501) 682-8473
Manager, Behavioral Treatment Unit	(501) 682-8441
Manager, Independent Living Program	(501) 682-8453
Manager, Foster Care Unit	(501) 682-1569

Assistant Director, Office of Legislative Analysis, Research and Planning..... (501) 682-8544

Manager, Policy Unit	(501) 682-8750
Manager, Mental Health Services	(501) 683-2045
Manager, Child Welfare Agency Licensing Unit	(501) 321-2583
Manager, Professional Development Unit	(501) 683-2041
Manager, Planning and Research	(501) 682-1554
Manager, Quality Assurance Unit	(501) 682-9975
COA Coordinator	(501) 683-2648

Assistant Director, Office of Financial and Administrative Support..... (501) 682-8432

Manager, Accounts Payable	(501) 682-8846
Manager, Contracts Management	(501) 682-8435
Manager, Personnel	(501) 682-8754

**DIVISION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
STAFF DIRECTORY, Continued**

DHS "Hotline" Phone Numbers

ARKids FIRST 1-888-474-8275

Child Abuse Hotline 1-800-482-5964 TDD 1-800-843-6349

Medicaid Questions 1-800-482-5431

Medicaid Transportation Questions 1-888-987-1200

Mailing Address

Arkansas Department of Human Services

P.O. Box 1437, Slot S 560

700 Main Street

Little Rock, Arkansas 72203-1437

Phone (501) 682-8770

Fax (501) 682-6968

TDD (501) 682-1442

OTHER HELPFUL NUMBERS

**SUICIDE HOTLINE: If you are SUICIDAL
Please dial 1-800-SUICIDE
(1-800-784-2433)
Hours: 24 hours**

1. Alcoholics Anonymous 1-800-923-8722
2. Drug Abuse Information and Referral Line (800) 662-HELP
(1-800-662-4357)
3. Girl's and Boy's Town National Hotline 1-800-448-3000
(English/Spanish) Hours: 24 hrs
4. National Domestic Violence Hotline (800) 799-7233
5. State Health Dept. prenatal care and teen pregnancy hot line:
(800) 235-0002
6. Planned Parenthood for birth control, emergency contraception,
anonymous HIV testing, and prenatal care: 1-501-666-7526
7. Rape Crisis Inc. 1-877-432-5368
8. Runaway Hotline (800) 231-6946
9. Shoplifters Anonymous (800) 848-9595
10. Youth Crisis Hotline (800) 448-4663



How Children Can Speak Up for Themselves

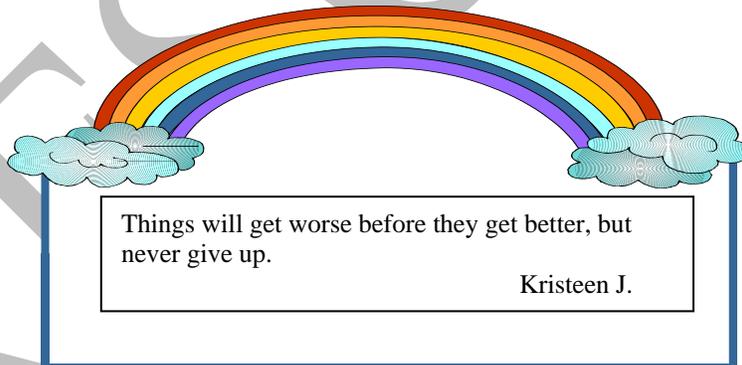
1. Youth Advisory Board (YAB)

Mission Statement:

The Arkansas Youth Advisory Board (YAB) are responsible youth in foster care, volunteering to help link youth to government and public agencies to better care for and provide services to youth in foster care. YAB provides inspiration to children and young adults in Arkansas Foster Care.

YAB members are in contact with other youth in their area each month to discuss issues, concerns and suggestions for sharing with Area DCFS staff and DCFS Central Office Staff. The items for discussion may be collected during life-skills training sessions held in the areas each month or YAB members meet quarterly to bring information, ideas and concerns to DCFS staff and other interested groups and individuals. Contact the ILP State Coordinator at (501) 682-8453 to find out who your area YAB member is so you can let them know about things you would like to share with other youth and agency staff.

2. The Department of Human Services (DHS) county office will inform you of other resources in your community.



Dealing with Grief and Loss

There are five (5) stages of the grief or loss process.

- 1) **Denial** - In the denial stage a child will refuse to believe what has happened. In his mind the child will tell himself that life is as it was before the loss.
- 2) **Anger** - Anger is the next stage of grief. A child may blame others or himself for the loss.
- 3) **Bargaining** - Bargaining can be with yourself or if you are religious, with your god. Often something will be offered to try to take away the truth of what has happened. It is only human to want things as they were before.
- 4) **Depression** - Depression is likely for all people that grieve for a loss. Some of the feelings are like there is no purpose to life anymore or feeling guilty, like everything is your fault. If there is a feeling of doing yourself any harm, professional counseling should be found immediately.
- 5) **Acceptance** - The final stage of grief is acceptance. It is when the child realizes that life has to go on. The child can accept his loss. The child should now be able to regain his energy and goals for the future.

An Example of How to Deal with Counseling (A true story)

I am a sufferer of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. I have had this disorder from the first days of my childhood. When I was the ages of about five and nine I washed my hands (for fear of germs) until they cracked and bled. I also had a difficult time performing daily tasks such as getting dressed, doing chores, and walking to school. That is when my parents first suspected I had a problem. I went to a psychiatrist and they told my parents that it was probably nothing and that little kids do weird things. They were wrong. During that period of time I possessed so much shame around the fact that there was something wrong with me that I could not admit this secret to anyone. This denial only added more difficulty to my daily routines because I had to focus on believing the lie that I was just like everyone else. This lie plagued my life until I was 16 when (with the help of my nighttime prayers to God to take this defect away from me) I finally mustered up the courage to tell my parents that I was well aware and had been of this continuing problem. It felt good to finally admit it.

From that point I began to tell my psychiatrist about this secret I had. It was very helpful to me when he assured me that many people have this disorder and that I didn't have to live this way. It was especially helpful when he let me know in no uncertain terms that I was not crazy.

I enjoyed the meetings with my psychiatrist because he made me feel genuinely cared for, not like an interesting case study. He validated my feelings about my disorder with hard textbook facts, but still encouraged me to be an individual. In other words, I felt less alone because a lot of my symptoms had been documented, but I still felt unique. Medication also provided me a little rest from my constant daily battle with my brain. It did not cure me, but it allowed me a choice between whether or not my compulsions were worth my time and energy.

Now that I am 24, I have a little more perspective on what worked for me as an adolescent. The most helpful things to me were a supportive family, a doctor who truly cared for me, medication, as well as a willingness to work with these resources. With supports like these, I don't believe one can go wrong.

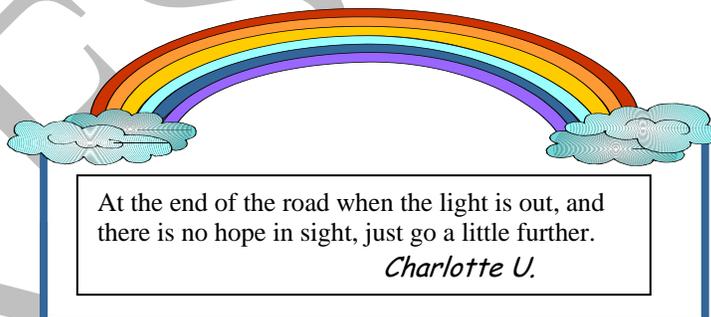
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What did not work for me was the attitudes of certain service providers. I felt that I was very lucky in finding people that really cared about helping people. As an adult, I can now see that there are a lot of service providers (psychiatrists, M.S.W.'s, etc.) who are selfish and look to children with mental health disorders as an opportunity to better their resumes. I have had experiences with mental health professionals who write you a prescription and send you on your way because they are so burned out that they have lost the ability to care. I have dealt with mental health professionals who believe all a mentally ill person can achieve is to become a member of society that does not draw attention to herself. That does not work for me.

I was very fortunate for the most part growing up with OCD. But I have also seen the stigma that is attached to people like me. I have seen us chastised and silenced by "professionals." That is why I am not signing my name. In my personal opinion, I am a professional. I am a professional sufferer of O.C.D. I am not an animal. I am a person with family, friends, wants, needs, dreams, and the ability to carry them out. I am more than another case study. I deserve to be treated with respect and dignity.
-- Anonymous

Reprinted with permission: Anonymous (2001). I am a sufferer of obsessive-compulsive disorder. Focal Point, 15(1), 12.

Note: If more information is needed concerning grief, loss or how to deal with counseling, please contact the local CFCIP Coordinator for assistance.



What's Up About a Child's Personal Information

DCFS will protect the child's personal information. DCFS will not release information that can identify a child in foster care. If any information is to be released to the media about the child in foster care, the information must be reviewed and approved by DCFS attorneys. A judge can order that specific information to a specified office, agency or people be released.

DCFS will give consideration to protecting the child's identity and release information that will not be distasteful or negative to the child.

As long as a child is not identified as a foster child, he/she can get their name in the newspaper and at conferences, etc. If the child is identified as a foster child, (like for adoption recruitment) then the first names only is used, otherwise, permission from everyone (the judge, Attorney Ad Litem, child, and parents, if their rights have not been terminated) is needed to use the whole name.

Resolutions for avoiding misery:

Choose to love- rather than hate
Choose to smile- rather than frown
Choose to build- rather than destroy
Choose to preserve- rather than quit
Choose to praise- rather than gossip
Choose to heal- rather than wound
Choose to give- rather than grasp
Choose to act- rather than delay
Choose to forgive- rather than curse
Choose to pray- rather than despair

Nicki J.



Definitions

1. **Attorney Ad Litem** – This is the child’s attorney who is appointed by the court. This attorney must tell the judge what the child wants.
2. **CASA** – This person is a volunteer advocate that is appointed by the court. This person will tell the judge what he/she feels is in the best interest of the child based on information he/she has gathered from the child and other people who know the child.
3. **Case Plan** – A plan that DCFS makes along with the child and family that includes services provided to the child and family to help them reach the goal of a permanent placement of the child.
4. **Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP)** – Works with youth age 14-20 who are interested in furthering their educational goals and who volunteer to be in the program. The program provides life skills training to help prepare the youth to live on their own.
5. **Child Maltreatment** – Physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, sexual exploitation or abandonment of a child.
6. **Foster Care** - A safe place for the child to stay while the conditions which caused the child to be removed from the home are eliminated.
7. **Independence** – A plan for a child who will not be reunited with his/her family and no other permanent plan is available and termination of parental rights is not in the best interest of the child.

You can be as happy as you decide.

Nicki J.

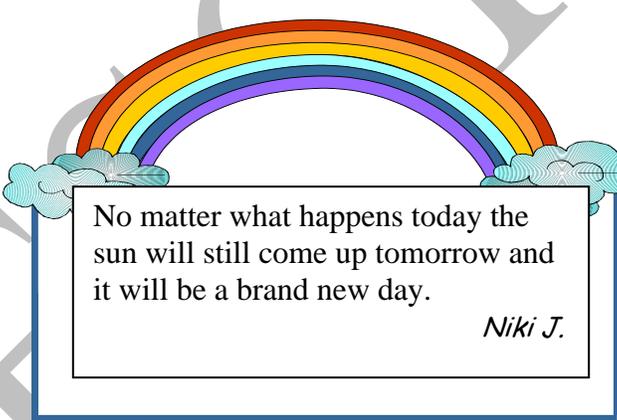
Court Procedures and Legal Terminology

When a child is placed in the custody of the State of Arkansas, there is a hearing (a meeting at court). Biological parents have the right to be represented by attorneys. The child is represented by an Attorney Ad Litem who is appointed by the court to act on a minor's behalf in a legal proceeding and to protect the youth's interest in court.

Protective Custody – If circumstances of the child or home present an immediate danger of severe maltreatment, the child will be taken out of the home.

Permanency Planning Hearing – A meeting in court to review the options for placing a child in a permanent safe placement. The judge may decide that DHS should have custody. Later, the judge can make decisions about whether you return home or stay in care.

Termination of Parental Rights – To free a child for adoption, when it has been determined that it is not a good option to reunite the child with the family.



No matter what happens today the sun will still come up tomorrow and it will be a brand new day.

Niki J.



New Independent Living Legislation

The Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP), formerly the Title IV-E Independent Living Initiative) was established and formally funded in 1993 to assist teens who choose to participate in the program complete high school, obtain a GED and continue their post-secondary educational process. The program is intended to assist those teens referred to the program for the acquisition of basic life skills as they transition from adolescence to adulthood. The basic premises and intent of the program have been expanded by federal legislation.

The 1994 Angela R. Settlement Agreement charged the Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) with the responsibility to provide instruction for developing independent living skills for all foster teens age 14 or older for whom the case goal was not reunification. The program was prohibited by federal law from providing Independent Living services to teens under age 16 using federal funds. In early 1995, the program began including teens age 14-15 in life skills training sessions. That was done without expending federal dollars.

Since December 1999, the Chafee program can now provide age-appropriate life skills training to all foster teens age 14 or older. The program provides or arranges for training for teens on an individual or group basis, if needed and as recommended by the case manager. Teens may volunteer and be referred to the program to take advantage of additional services offered. Services are educational or employment oriented and requires the teen to fulfill specific obligations and meet specific standards to maintain eligibility for continued Independent Living services. Assistance with educational and employment expenses and the initial establishment of living quarters are services that are provided beyond the normal scope of expenditures of the Division of Children and Family Services. The program may also provide limited assistance with room and board expenses to youth age 18-21 that have left foster care and have chosen not to pursue post-secondary educational goals.

CFCIP

The Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) provides funds directed toward assisting youth that are or were in foster care to become independent adults. The program is geared toward youth, who are participating in an educational program, providing assistance to youth in completing high school or obtaining a GED, and/or continuing in post-secondary educational programs. The program also provides temporary, limited assistance to youth that have aged out of care by providing room and board and start-up assistance.

Assistance is also available to former foster youth who are pursuing post-secondary educational goals. The Educational Training Voucher Program can provide financial assistance for this goal.

CFCIP provides support for:

1. Children in foster care ages 14-17.

Services for this age group include:

- the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment,
- basic life skills training, and
- other service, such as tutoring that can be approved on a case-by-case basis.

2. Children who remain in DHS custody, between the ages of 18 and 21 and are engaged in post-secondary education, including vocational training, are eligible for CFCIP. (See page 25 for information on the Arkansas Education and Training Voucher Program.)

3. If a youth was in foster care on his 18th birthday, and his foster care case is closed, he will be eligible for CFCIP “ After Care” and can receive assistance until age 21.

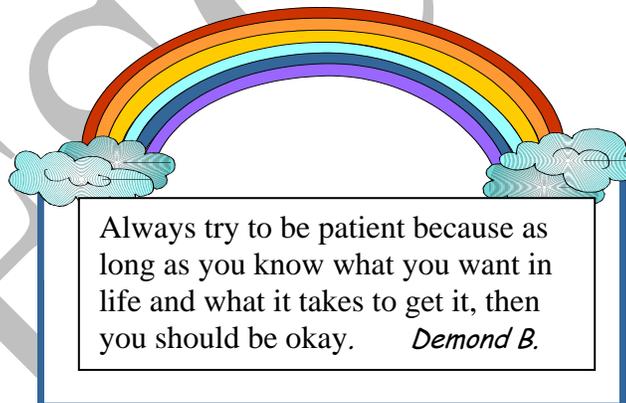
After Care services include:

- limited room and board,
- limited start-up assistance, and
- staff services and life-skills training sessions to acquire needed skills.

PUB-404 (Chafee Foster Care Independence Program Handbook) provides additional information concerning CFCIP and service availability.

Education, Employment, Housing, Health Care

Within the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP), Life-skills Training Curriculum, there are fifteen (15) categories and sub-categories of curriculum topics that should be available in each DCFS Area for teens to attend for life-skills training. The areas of training include: Money Management, Food Management Personal Appearance, Health, Housekeeping, Transportation, Educational Planning, Job Seeking Skills, Job Maintenance Skills, Emergency and Safety Skills, Knowledge of Community Resources, Interpersonal Skills, Legal Skills, Housing and other skills, such as parenting.



The Arkansas Education and Training Voucher Program (AR-ETV)

What is AR-ETV?

- A federally funded program that offers students up to \$5000 a year for college and vocational/technical training.

Who is eligible?

- Young people who are or were in foster care and are ages 18 to 20
- Young people adopted from foster care after the age of 16
- Participants must be accepted into or enrolled in an accredited college or vocational/technical training program
- Participation is renewable until age 23

Funds can be used for:

- Tuition
- Books/Computers
- School supplies
- Living Expenses (rent, child care, health insurance, groceries, and transportation)

How to apply:

- Go to www.statevoucher.org click on Arkansas on the map
- Fill in an application
- Submit the paperwork

Note: Please direct questions to Orphan Foundation of America, ETV Program Director, ar@statevoucher.org or call 1.800.950.4673. You may also contact Jim Dennis, Arkansas Statewide Chafee Foster Care Independence Coordinator at 1-501-682-8453.

RESOURCES

Remove this card and keep it in a safe place.

<p>If a youth was in foster care on his 18th birthday, and his foster care is closed, he will be eligible for CFCIP "After Care" and can receive assistance until age 21.</p> <p>After Care services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited room and board,• Limited start-up assistance, and• Staff services and life-skills training sessions to acquire needed skills. <p>Assistance is also available to former foster youth who are pursuing post-secondary educational goals. The Educational Training Voucher Program can provide financial assistance for this goal.</p>	<p>You may be eligible for CFCIP "After Care" services until age 21.</p> <p>Contact for more information:</p> <hr/> <p>Caseworker Name</p> <hr/> <p>Phone Number</p> <p>ILP State Coordinator James Dennis (501) 682-8453</p>
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RESOURCES

Remove this card and keep it in a safe place.

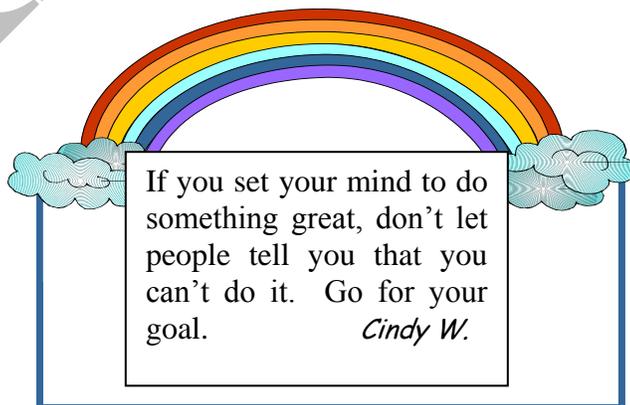
<p>WERE YOU IN FOSTER CARE?</p> <p>YOU MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR STATE FUNDING FOR COLLEGE OR TRAINING IF:</p> <p>You aged out of foster care or were adopted from foster care after the age of 16 – you are under the age of 21 – you are accepted into or enrolled in an accredited college or vocational training program – you can show progress towards a degree or certificate</p>	<p>EDUCATION AND TRAINING VOUCHER (ETV) PROGRAM</p> <p>www.statevoucher.org</p> <p>OFA</p>
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RESCIND



Personal Information and Note Space

RESOUND



If you set your mind to do something great, don't let people tell you that you can't do it. Go for your goal.
Cindy W.



REF

EXCERPT, DIVISION OF CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES, PUB-30

Board Payment

DCFS makes a monthly board payment to foster parents. This monthly board payment includes payment for room and board, clothing, ongoing school and personal supplies, and a small allowance for the child. The amount listed below is included in the monthly board payment and must be used for the child. ~~All medical and dental services, including hospitalization, will be paid by Medicaid funds and/or state funds. If a child in foster care is eligible for Medicaid, foster parents are expected~~ required to use a Medicaid provider for meeting the medical needs of the child. Medicaid should be the primary payment source for medical and dental services, including hospitalization. If Medicaid cannot cover such expenses, state funds may be a secondary payment option.

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Generally, foster parents receive the board payment ~~in the fourth week between the 6th and 10th~~ of each month. ~~Checks may be received as early as the 27th of the month, although this is not guaranteed.~~ The monthly board payment is for the period starting on the 27th of the month and ending the 26th of the following month. For example, October's board payment is for the thirty days that begin September 27th and end on October 26th.

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Other services or supplies needed by the child must be authorized and approved per DCFS policy. (See section on additional expenses.)

Payment for Medical Services

Medicaid is the primary source of medical payment for children in foster care.

If a child in the home does not receive a Medicaid card, contact the Family Service Worker. (A card should be received within a week for a new child and by the third of the month thereafter.) Although the FSW may provide a copy of the Medicaid Card for the foster parent to keep in the Medical Passport, and so that they may obtain medical services for the child, the actual Medicaid Card will be kept in the child's case record in the county office. When there are no Medicaid providers available in cases of emergency, the Family Services Worker (with the approval of the DCFS County Supervisor) will authorize and bill medical services via DHS-1914 or contract. In the event medical services are denied by Medicaid, the child's medical needs ~~may~~ will be met with Foster Care funds. A child shall not be denied medical services because the child is not Medicaid eligible.

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EXCERPT, DIVISION OF CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES, PUB-30

INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM

The Independent Living Program, also known as the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program, assists youths age 14 through ~~21~~⁰ who are interested in furthering their educational/vocational goals and who voluntarily participate in the program's services. The program coordinates and provides life-skills training and educational assistance to current and former foster care youth in preparation for the transition into adulthood and mainstream society. Training is provided in various formats and in accordance with case plans. All training is coordinated through the assigned Family Service Workers located in one of the ten DCFS service areas. The local DCFS County Office can provide more information about this program. DCFS Publication 404, *Chafee Foster Care Independence Program Handbook*, outlines the program's services, policies and forms, and is available at: <https://ardhs.sharepoint.com/CW/DCFS/20Publications/PUB-404%20-08.pdf>

~~You Are Not Alone Be Your Own Advocate!~~

~~You Are Not Alone Be Your own Advocate~~, DCFS PUB-50, is a resource for ~~those children~~^{youth} in foster care who are ages 14 through ~~21~~⁰, and ~~it~~ was developed ~~along with the Youth Advisory Board~~ to provide ~~the child~~^{youth} with information ~~he/she~~^{they} will need while in foster care. This book is only a reference guide. The ~~child~~^{youth} may contact DCFS for any questions or further explanations.

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INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM

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Be Your Own Advocate!

Be Your own Advocate, DCFS PUB-50, is a resource for youth in foster care who are ages 14 through 21. It was developed along with the Youth Advisory Board to provide youth with information they will need while in foster care. This book is only a reference guide. The youth may contact DCFS for any questions or further explanations.

Care * Commit * Connect

DCFS currently connects clients with open cases to the following community services:

- Counseling
- Child care
- Drug treatment
- Intensive family services
- Interpretation for the hearing impaired
- Psychological evaluations
- Residential care
- Respite and shelter care
- Support groups for sexual abuse victims and non-offending caretakers
- Therapeutic foster care
- Treatment for perpetrators of child sexual abuse
- Translation for non-English speaking clients

A complete list of current contracted services and community providers is posted on the DCFS website: <http://www.arkansas.gov/dhs/chiinfam>

DCFS agency staff directly provides the following services:

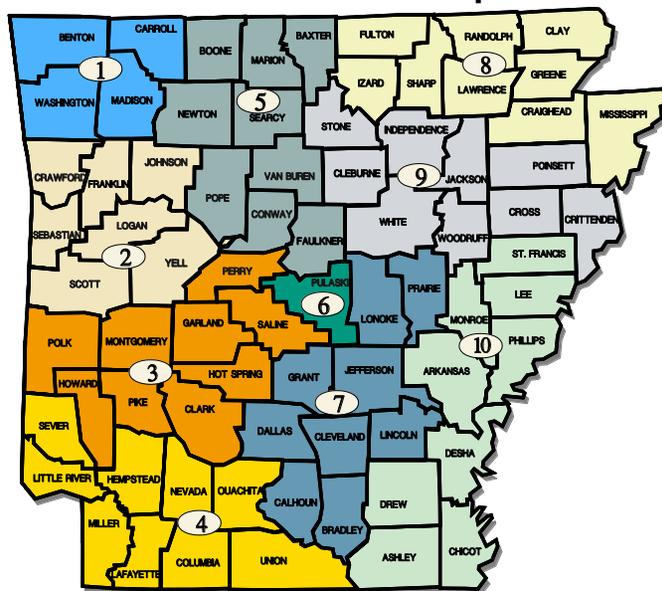
- Adoption services
- Case management
- Family support
- Foster care services
- Transitional services for youth 14-21
- Parenting education and support
- Protective services
- Reunification and supportive services

If you are interested in more information regarding what services are available in your specific county, please contact your local DCFS county office. Contact information for county offices can be found at: <http://www.arkansas.gov/dhs>

Pub 409



DCFS Area Map



For assistance in contacting your county office, dial your area office number below:

Area 1: 479-442-4029

Area 2: 479-782-4555

Area 3: 501-847-6056

Area 4: 870-777-8656

Area 5: 501-730-9907

Area 6: 501-371-1122

Area 7: 870-534-4200

Area 8: 870-972-1732

Area 9: 870-732-5170

Area 10: 870-367-6835

Care * Commit * Connect

Division of Children and Family Services

Care * Commit * Connect

WHAT IS DCFS?



A Guide to the Services Provided by DCFS



What is DCFS?

The Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is a part of the Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS). DCFS works to keep children safe and families together. The Division also provides foster care when a child must be removed from his or her home; when this happens, DCFS works with the family to reunite them with their child as soon as safely possible. If it's not possible for the child to return home, DCFS works to find him or her a temporary safe place to live until an adoptive home or another appropriate permanent placement can be found.

What is the Mission of DCFS?

Our mission is to keep children safe and help families. DCFS will respectfully engage families and youth and use community-based services and supports to assist parents in successfully caring for their children. We will focus on the safety, permanency and well-being of all children and youth.

What services does DCFS generally provide?

DCFS offers many services. Some services are provided directly to families by agency staff and DCFS partners. Other services are provided by community agencies. Services may be either voluntary or court-ordered. A family's strengths and needs are assessed in order to find out which services are appropriate; this includes a discussion with the family. *Due to limited funding and capacity, some services are not available in all counties.* Despite these limitations, DCFS always works to keep children safe and strengthen Arkansas families.

Care * Commit * Connect

Specific DCFS Services

Supportive Services help to strengthen families and prevent child maltreatment by addressing the underlying causes *before* it occurs. These services are *voluntary* and families may request them at any time. If you feel you or your family may be in need of support, please contact your DCFS county office. Services may include:

- Counseling
- Parent education
- Tutoring

For more information call (501) 682-2447

Child Maltreatment Investigations involve DCFS and State Police investigations of reports of alleged child maltreatment. The investigation determines if the evidence proves child maltreatment occurred. Also, the investigation determines if the involved children are safe in their home. If a child's health or safety is at risk, a safety plan may be developed or the child may be placed in an out-of-home placement.

For more information call (501) 682-1554

Child Protective Services are provided by DCFS staff and more than 100 community-based providers throughout Arkansas. These services may be part of the case plan developed by the family and the DCFS worker. The juvenile judges may also order these services as part of the case plan. Services may include:

- Counseling
- In-home support
- Language interpreters
- Parent education
- Supervised visitation
- In-home parenting services

For more information, call (501) 682-1554

Temporary Out-of-Home Services provide a child who cannot safely remain in his or her home with a short-term place to live while DCFS has custody of the child. Some children may be placed with a foster family, while other children may be placed in a specialized medical and/or therapeutic setting that best meets their needs. Non-parental relatives who want to take care of the child may become a type of foster parents known as provisional foster parents, who must be evaluated, trained, and approved like any other foster parent.

For more information call (501) 682-8537

Transitional Services provide basic life skills and training to youth in foster care to help prepare them for a successful transition into adulthood. These services encourage youth to complete high school and continue their education. Youth receive assistance with their post-secondary educational needs and/or vocational training.

The Arkansas Education and Training Voucher Program (ETV) offers funds to foster youth and former foster youth to help them to attend colleges, universities, and vocational training on a first-come, first-serve basis.

For more information call (501) 682-8453

Adoption Services aim to find a permanent, loving home for children who cannot safely return to their parents or family. Services may include:

- Locating, evaluating, and training families who want to adopt a child
- Maintaining a Voluntary Adoption Registry
- Assisting adoptive families with applying for adoption subsidies
- Assisting birth parents who choose to place their newborn for adoption

For more information call (501) 682-8437

POLICY VI-G: INTERSTATE COMPACT ON PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN

07/2010

The Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) is used to move children in need of a foster or pre-adoptive placement, adoption across state lines, or reunification with parents in an orderly and timely manner. A child in foster care is defined as a child who has been removed from the home of a parent, guardian, or custodian by a court of competent jurisdiction and whose custody has been placed with a private or public agency.

When a child requires placement for foster care or a possible adoption outside the resident state, DCFS shall use the ICPC process. DCFS will ensure all potential out-of-state relative placements are given the same opportunity as in-state relative placements to become foster homes. Homes of relatives approved under the Articles of ICPC will be considered approved foster homes. Unless authorized by the ICPC, all communications with other states regarding approval of placement, progress reports, disruption of placement, or termination of the ICPC case should process through the Arkansas ICPC Central Office, to the ICPC liaisons. For the most up-to-date information regarding ICPC articles and regulations, go to <http://icpc.aphsa.org/Home/resources.asp>.

The ICPC process ensures:

- A. Proper extensions of authority into the receiving state.
- B. The sending agency can obtain home studies for proposed placements, is identified as legally and financially responsible, and does not lose jurisdiction once the child leaves the sending state.
- C. The receiving agency can determine the placement is not “contrary to the child’s interests” and that all applicable laws and policies have been followed.
- D. Supervision is maintained out-of-state and the sending agency receives progress reports.
- E. Maximum opportunity for each child to be suitably placed
- F. Proper information to authorities in the receiving state.
- G. Effective utilization of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely foster, adoptive, or permanent placements.

DCFS caseworkers should not directly contact the ICPC offices in other states, but should direct their communication to the ICPC liaisons in their Area. Liaisons will then communicate with Central Office. Interstate communication between field staff from the involved states is discouraged, except for the routine sharing of information, which is NOT related to case approval, progress reports, disruption, or termination of placement.

The Juvenile Division of Circuit Court shall retain jurisdiction to issue orders of adoption, interlocutory or final, when a child is placed outside the state of Arkansas.

PROCEDURE VI-G1: Types of Placement Covered by ICPC

Children placed out-of-state are to go through ICPC when one of the following placements occurs:

- Foster care placements
- Pre-adoption placements
- Adoptive placements

- Parent, other relative, or non-agency guardian placements (Non-agency guardian is an individual that is not a child welfare agency, government entity, or within a certain degree of kinship, that has been appointed under the appropriate state guardianship statute.)

If guardianship is established as a prelude to a non-relative adoption, the guardian shall comply with this compact. If in doubt, request clarification from the Arkansas Interstate Compact Unit, P.O. Box 1437, Slot S567 Little Rock, Arkansas, 72203-1437. Phone: (501) 682-8556.

PROCEDURE VI-G2: Types of Placement Not Covered by ICPC

Types of placements that are not covered by ICPC include:

- A. Divorce or custody investigations involving home studies
- B. Placement of a probationer, parolee, or aftercare juvenile
- C. Interstate placement of children with mental disabilities
- D. Placement into a primarily educational institution
- E. Runaways from Arkansas to another state or to Arkansas from another state. (See Procedure VI G16 about other compacts).
- F. Kidnapped children transported out-of-state
- G. Visits that do not extend beyond 30 days and are not pre-placement visits
- H. Placement outside the resident state when custody will be transferred to that person

PROCEDURE VI-G3: Responsibilities of the Sending State

07/2010

The sending party will:

- A. Provide proper notice of the intent to place using the ICPC-100A (ICPC Request) and receive authorization from the receiving state prior to the placement. The 100A must clearly indicate DCFS is the sending party.
- B. Document in the case file and ICPC packet that potential out-of-state relative placements were offered the option of becoming a paid foster home.
- C. Work with the receiving parties to arrange the placement details (i.e., childcare payment, type of monitoring, frequency of supervisory reports, and transportation) after approval is given.

The sending state shall not recommend that custody be given to the placement resource without completion of at least six months of supervision, and concurrence of the receiving state. Failure to comply with these requirements violates the terms under which the receiving state originally gave placement approval. This could result in the child and placement resource being without essential medical coverage and a request for the child to be returned to the sending state.

- D. Provide additional information when requested by the receiving state to ensure the placement is not “contrary to the interests of the child.”

Any such report from another state, Indian tribe, or private agency under contract with the receiving state, shall meet all requirements imposed by the sending state for the completion of the home study before placing the child in the home. This will be done unless, within fourteen days after receipt of the report,

the sending state determines based on specific grounds in the report that making a decision based on the report would be contrary to the welfare of the child.

- E. Notify the receiving state of the placement date and any change in the child's status by using the ICPC-100B (Report on Child's Placement Status).
- F. Retain jurisdiction over the child sufficient to determine all matters of custody, supervision, care, and disposition of the child until the child is adopted, reaches majority, becomes self-supporting, or is discharged with concurrence of the appropriate authority in the receiving state.
- G. Retain planning and financial responsibility for the duration of the placement and indicate this responsibility on the ICPC-100A.

The one exception comes under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA) requiring that children under title IV-E adoption assistance agreements and those receiving title IV-E foster care payments will be granted Medicaid coverage in their current resident state. (See Medical Services Manual, Section 6600 to 6673.)

- H. Return the child to the sending state at the request of the receiving state.

PROCEDURE VI-G4: Responsibilities of the Receiving State

07/2010

Within sixty days after receiving a request for a home study from another state, the receiving state will directly or by contract:

- A. Assess and monitor the placement to ensure compliance with applicable laws and policies of the receiving state, and that the placement is "not contrary to the interests of the child."
- B. Notify the sending state in writing whether or not the placement is appropriate and in the best interest of the child.

The receiving state is not required to complete those parts of the home study within the designated time period that involve the education and training of the prospective foster or adoptive parents.

- C. Supervise the placement and provide or arrange for necessary services after the child is placed and the ICPC-100B received.
- D. Submit quarterly progress reports to the sending party. More frequent reports may be submitted on request.
- E. Honor and enforce lawful orders of the court of jurisdiction of the sending state unless it conflicts with Arkansas policies and/or laws.

PROCEDURE VI-G5: Placing Arkansas Children in Another State and Requesting Out-of-State Home Studies

07/2010

The following are procedures to use when requesting an out-of-state home study for an Arkansas child, including placement into residential treatment facilities. Always use the child's name on the correspondence.

The sending party (county office, etc.) will follow CFS-6092: ICPC Home Study Request Check List and compile an Interstate Compact Placement Packet consisting of **THREE** copies of each of the following (include **FIVE** copies of ICPC-100A):

- A. Cover Letter (CFS-6092-COVER LETTER) to explain the placement plans.
- B. ICPC-100A: Interstate Compact Placement Request (Retain one copy and include five completed, signed, and dated copies with the packet.)
- C. Court order (most recent) showing that DHS has custody or the court has jurisdiction of the child (i.e. adjudication order, recent review order)
- D. Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) for an adoptive home study
- E. ICPC-101: Priority Home Study Request
- F. Current Case Plan (CFS-6010).
- G. Social Summary (CFS-6092-SOCIAL SUMMARY) OR an Adoption Summary if requesting a pre-adoptive placement.
- H. Medical Records / Reports (PACE evaluation, if available), including Immunization Records
- I. School Reports / Records from the past three years, if applicable.
- J. Psychological Evaluations/ Reports and Counseling Reports, if applicable
- K. Financial/Medical Plan (CFS-592)The form must indicate that DCFS is the sending party and will retain financial and planning responsibility for the child.
- L. IV-E Eligibility form (Print screen of CHRIS Foster Care Determination Window.) Financial arrangements should always be discussed with the prospective placement resource before the home study is requested. If a board payment is needed, a foster home study must be requested.
- M.
- N. Proof of Citizenship—U.S. Birth Certificate or other birth records. If birth records are not available, you can ask if the client has any other citizenship-related documents such as those listed in Sections 6700, 6703, & 6705 of the following link:
<http://www.arkansas.gov/dhs/webpolicy/Medical%20Services/MS%206700.htm>Proof of Identity—A Social Security Card, completed application for a duplicate card, or school ID with photo (Per DCFS Eligibility Unit, federal authority will determine other acceptable documents of a child’s identity “at a later date.”)
- O. Photo of Child or Children—This is not required, but is strongly suggested

Send packet to ICPCUnit, Donaghey Plaza South, 700 Main Street, P.O. Box 1437, Slot S567, Little Rock, Arkansas 72201-1437.

Financial arrangements should be discussed with the prospective placement resource and put in writing before the study is requested. If a board payment is needed, a foster home study must be requested.

The Arkansas ICPC Central Office will:

- A. Review the packet to determine whether or not it is complete and ready to forward to the receiving state’s ICPC office.
- B. Coordinate with the sending party if changes in the packet are needed.
- C. Send packet to receiving state’s compact office.
- D. Notify sending party of disposition.
- E.

The Family Service Worker and/or Area ICPC Liaison will:

- A. Complete and route the ICPC-100B to the ICPC office if the out-of-state placement is approved and made. Show the date of the placement or of the withdrawal of the request.
- B. Close the Arkansas Medicaid so that Medicaid services can be pursued in the receiving state.

- C. Code the CFS-6013: Application for Emergency Services to show ICPC service using the child's name.
- D. Key the case type in CHRIS as "ICPC" for the child placed by the Division in another state.
- E. Notify the Adoption Services Unit of a proposed adoptive placement, if appropriate.
- F. Coordinate the travel plans with the Family Service Worker if placement is approved (placement must be made within six months of placement approval)

Communication between states regarding approval of placements, progress reports, case closures, and disruptions must go through the Arkansas ICPC Central Office.

PROCEDURE VI-G6: Children Entering Arkansas for Placement

Services to children should not begin without a completed home study, placement approval (ICPC-100A) from the receiving state's ICPC office AND receipt of placement notification (ICPC-100B) from the sending state's ICPC office. Requests from sending state should include the same information as described in the Interstate Placement Packet and outlined in Procedure VI-G5. Contact the Arkansas ICPC Central Office if additional information is needed from the sending state to initiate services. Supervision of a placement will not begin until the receiving state obtains ICPC-100B.

PROCEDURE VI-G7: Completion of a Home Study

The Area ICPC Liaison will

- A. ensure the completion of
 - 1) Central Registry Check
 - 2) thorough home study, including the results of the Arkansas State Police Criminal Record Check and the FBI Criminal Background Check; if available, with signed recommendation regarding placement within sixty calendar days of a request.

The DCFS Supervisor or Area Director must also make a recommendation for or against placement. If the criminal record checks have not been received, a copy of the application/request must be included in the packet and the results sent when received.

- B. Notify the ICPC Central Office in writing if there is to be a delay.
Include CFS-316: Request for Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check and CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check.

No child shall be placed in the home of a foster parent where a records check reveals a felony conviction for child abuse or neglect, for spousal abuse, for a crime against children (including child pornography), or a crime involving violence, including rape, sexual assault or homicide. No child shall be placed in the home of a foster parent if the record check reveals a criminal conviction for physical assault, battery, or a drug related offense, if the offense was committed within the past five years.

- C. Send the home study to the ICPC Central Office, not directly to the other state.
- D. Any state agency that administers or supervises the administration of a state program operated under such an approved state plan will not be restricted from contracting with a private agency to conduct home studies.
- E.
- F. The Adoption Manager must sign and date the recommendation in an adoption home study.

PROCEDURE VI-G8: Routing of a Home Study

ICPC approved home study packets are valid for six months from the date the ICPC Central Office signed the ICPC-100A. The child must be placed within that 6-month period.

The Arkansas ICPC Central Office (Receiving State) will:

- A. Review the home study to determine whether or not it is complete.
- B. If the home study is complete, forward to the sending state's ICPC office.

If Arkansas receives an approved home study from another state, the ICPC Central Office will forward the approved home study and the ICPC-100B to the appropriate ICPC liaison.

The ICPC liaison will forward the approved home study and the ICPC-100A to the assigned caseworker

The assigned caseworker and/or supervisor will, with the court's concurrence, make a determination as to whether or not placement will be made. When the determination has been made, an ICPC-100B will be prepared and forwarded to the ICPC liaison. The liaison will, within 72 hours of placement, send it to the ICPC Central Office who will forward to the appropriate state.

If the home study is denied, the ICPC Unit will process the denied home study request by forwarding a copy of the following to the appropriate ICPC liaison:

- A. The denied home study
- B. The ICPC-100A which indicates, in Section IV, "placement shall not be made"

The ICPC liaison will forward the documents to the appropriate FSW or supervisor.

The FSW or supervisor will:

- A. File the denied home study and ICPC-100A in the appropriate case file and close the case **OR**,
- B. Appeal the receiving state's denial of the home study by:
 - 1) Preparing a formal request with available supporting documentation to justify why the home study denial should be appealed
 - 2) Forwarding to the immediate supervisor for approval
 - 3) If approved, forwarding to the Area Director for approval
 - 4) If approved, forwarding to the ICPC Central Office

The Arkansas ICPC Central Office will:

- A. Forward a copy of the appeal to the appropriate state's ICPC office for reconsideration of the denied home study.
- B. If the appeal is denied, the FSW must wait a minimum of six months before re-initiation of the home study.

PROCEDURE VI-G9: Follow-up, Routing, and Monitoring

The Family Service Worker in Arkansas will:

- A. Provide monthly supervision of the child and send quarterly progress reports to their ICPC Liaison or as often as requested on the ICPC-100A. The ICPC Liaison will then forward the reports to the ICPC Central Office.
- B. Notify the ICPC Central Office, immediately, if problems or changes with placement occur.
- C. Key the case type in CHRIS as "ICPC" for the child placed in Arkansas from another state.

PROCEDURE VI-G10: Travel Procedures for Children Receiving Out-of-Home Placement Services

When an Arkansas child in foster care has been approved to move into or out of Arkansas for a foster care or adoptive placement, or for reunification with parents, the Family Service Worker/Area ICPC Liaison will:

- A. Submit request for travel to ICPC Central Office with “Application for Out-of-State Travel” (DHS-1010) no less than two weeks in advance. (The ICPC Central Office will be responsible for obtaining approvals for the travel.)
- B. Make necessary travel arrangements through a travel agency approved by DHS.
- C. Submit ICPC-100B to the ICPC Central Office for forwarding to the receiving state after the child is placed in the receiving state.

When an escort (state employee or non-state employee) is needed to assist with transporting an Arkansas child in foster care to or from an out-of-state placement, the Family Service Worker or Area ICPC Liaison will submit the same information as stated above for children in foster care travel. No travel shall commence until the DHS-1010s are signed.

PROCEDURE VI-G11: Other Travel Non-ICPC and Non-DCFS Children

For Non-ICPC travel, the Family Service Worker will:

- A. Request prior approval, using the DHS-1010 for a child and for an escort, as appropriate. (e.g., to attend a funeral, go on vacation with a foster parent or go on a visit of less than thirty days.)
- B. Direct requests and questions to the Foster Care Unit.

Exception: For children placed out-of-state by an Arkansas court, the sending party is responsible for arranging transportation (DHS does not have legal custody).

- C. Forward the DHS-1010 to the Assistant Director of Community Services and the DCFS Director for signature.
- D. Attach the child’s court order giving authority to travel and written documentation from the attorney ad litem.

An out-of-state visit is 30 days or less and is not subject to ICPC. However, if it is greater than 30 days, it is a placement, which is subject to ICPC.

PROCEDURE VI-G12: Progress Reports

The receiving state must:

- A. Send quarterly progress reports every three months unless otherwise stated on the ICPC-100A.
- B. Mail progress reports to ICPC Central Office for forwarding to the sending state.
- C. Enter the progress reports in the child’s case record in CHRIS.

PROCEDURE VI-G13: Termination of ICPC Cases

An Interstate Compact Placement can only be terminated with the concurrence of the receiving state ICPC Office. Reasons for terminating an ICPC placement include the following reasons:

- Adoption finalized

- Child reaches age of majority
- Child legally emancipated
- Legal custody returned to parent(s) or given to relative with a court order
- Treatment completed
- Sending state's jurisdiction terminated with the concurrence of the receiving state
- Unilateral termination
- Child returned to sending state
- Child has moved to another state Proposed placement request withdrawn
- Approved resource will not be used for placement
-

The Family Service Worker will complete ICPC-100B indicating termination reason and route it to the ICPC Central Office for forwarding to the receiving state.

The Arkansas ICPC Central Office will send the ICPC-100B to the sending or receiving state's ICPC office to notify them of the closure of the ICPC case.

The sending state is responsible for the original submission of both the ICPC-100A and 100B.

PROCEDURE VI-G14: Exceptions to Policy

Items and services not specified in this policy must have prior approval of the Interstate Compact Administrator or Deputy Administrator.

The Family Service Worker/Area ICPC Liaison, with the approval of the Area Director, will:

- A. Write a memo to the Interstate Compact Administrator to fully explain the situation.
- B. Request that exceptions to policy be made.

The Arkansas ICPC Administrator will:

- A. Review the request.
- B. Inform the Family Service Worker/Area ICPC Liaison of the decision.

PROCEDURE VI-G15: Request for a Priority Placement Regulation No. 7 in the Guide to the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children

A priority placement is when a court, upon request or on its own motion, or where court approval is required, determines that a proposed priority placement of a child from one state into another state is necessary because:

- A. The child is under two years of age;
- B. The child is in an emergency shelter; or
- C. The court finds that the child has spent a substantial amount of time in the home of the proposed placement recipient.

Regulation No. 7 does not define "substantial amount of time", consequently leaving its interpretation to the receiving state ICPC.

The receiving state agency has thirty days to complete a request for a priority placement. Requests for placement shall not be expedited or given priority except as outlined below.

A request for a priority placement will be implemented as follows:

- A. The court shall send its order to DCFS within two business days.
- B. The order shall include:
 - 1) The child's name, address and phone number;
 - 2) The Fax number of the judge and the court, if available.
 - 3) The sending party will send the following to the state Central Office ICPC via overnight mail, or fax, within three business days:
 - 4) The signed court order. (The court order must specify how the case qualifies as Regulation No. 7.);
 - 5) A completed ICPC-100A (ICPC Placement Request);
 - 6) Supporting documentation according to policy.
- C. Within two business days after the receipt of the ICPC priority placement request, the sending state ICPC office will overnight mail the priority request and its supporting documentation to the receiving state ICPC office with a notice that the request for placement is entitled to priority processing.
- D. The receiving state ICPC office shall send all the documents to the receiving state's local office within two days. The receiving state's local office has twenty working days to send a determination back to the receiving state's ICPC Office.
- E. The receiving ICPC office has two days to overnight mail the determination to the sending state's ICPC office. The sending state ICPC office has two days, through overnight mail, to send the determination to the local office.
- F. The foregoing shall not apply if:
 - 1) Within two business days of receipt of the ICPC priority placement request, the sending state Compact Administrator determines that the ICPC request documentation is substantially insufficient, specifies that additional information is needed, and request the additional documentation from the FSW by FAX or telephone if FAX is not available, or
 - 2) Within two business days of receipt of the ICPC priority placement request, the receiving state Compact Administrator notifies the sending state Compact Administrator that further information is necessary. Such notice shall specifically detail the information needed.

For such a case in which either of the two prior dot points apply, the twenty business day period for the receiving state Compact Administrator to complete action shall be calculated from the date of the receipt by the receiving state Compact Administrator of the additional information requested.

PROCEDURE VI-G16: Juvenile, Mental Health, and Adoption and Medical Assistance Compacts

In addition to the ICPC, three other Interstate Compacts were enacted to coordinate the interstate placements of children and juveniles as follows:

- A. Interstate Compact for Juveniles: This compact is designed to serve those children/youth needing an out-of-state placement who have been adjudicated delinquent and who have been placed on probation or parole. This compact also provides for the return of non-delinquent runaways, escapees, and absconders. This includes foster children/youth who run away and are located out of state. The Interstate Compact for Juveniles is administered by the Division of Youth Services.
- B. Interstate Compact on Mental Health: This compact is designed to facilitate the transfer of resident patients (both children and adults) from a state-operated mental health facility in one state to a similar state-operated facility in another state. The Mental Health Compact is administered by the Division of Behavioral Health Services.
- C. Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance: This compact is for adoption assistance for IV-E eligible children who are under an adoption subsidy agreement. The adoption worker should notify the Adoption Subsidy Coordinator as soon as it is known that an adoptive family/child is moving

out of state or has moved. The Adoption Subsidy Coordinator will send information to the new state of residence and also to the adoptive parents advising them to contact the local Medicaid office in their new state of residence. This contact will be for the purpose of getting medical benefits for their child in the new state of residence.

MARKUP

POLICY VI-G: INTERSTATE COMPACT ON PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN

07/2010

The Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) is used to move children in need of a foster or pre-adoptive placement, adoption across state lines, or reunification with parents in an orderly and timely manner. A child in foster care is defined as a child who has been removed from the home of his parent, guardian, or custodian by a court of competent jurisdiction and whose custody has been placed with a private or public agency.

When a child requires placement for foster care or a possible adoption outside the resident state, DCFS shall use the ICPC process. DCFS will ensure all potential out-of-state relative placements are given the same opportunity as in-state relative placements to become foster homes. Homes of relatives approved under the Articles of ICPC will be considered approved foster homes. Unless authorized by the ICPC, all communications with other states regarding approval of placement, progress reports, disruption of placement, or termination of the ICPC case should process through the Arkansas ICPC Central Office, to the ICPC liaisons. For the most up-to-date information regarding ICPC articles and regulations, go to <http://icpc.aphsa.org/Home/resources.asp>.

The ICPC process ensures:

- A. Proper extensions of authority into the receiving state.
- B. The sending agency can obtain home studies for proposed placements, is identified as legally and financially responsible, and does not lose jurisdiction once the child leaves the sending state.
- C. The receiving agency can determine the placement is not “contrary to the child’s interests” and that all applicable laws and policies have been followed.
- D. Supervision is maintained out-of-state and the sending agency receives progress reports.
- E. Maximum opportunity for each child to be suitably placed
- F. Proper information to authorities in the receiving state.
- G. Effective utilization of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely foster, adoptive, or permanent placements.

DCFS caseworkers should not directly contact the ICPC offices in other states, but should direct their communication to the ICPC liaisons in their Area. Liaisons will then communicate with Central Office. Interstate communication between field staff from the involved states is discouraged, except for the routine sharing of information, which is NOT related to case approval, progress reports, disruption, or termination of placement.

The Juvenile Division of Circuit Court shall retain jurisdiction to issue orders of adoption, interlocutory or final, when a child is placed outside the state of Arkansas.

PROCEDURE VI-G1: Types of Placement Covered by ICPC

Children placed out-of-state are to go through ICPC when one of the following placements occurs:

- Foster care placements
- Pre-adoption placements
- Adoptive placements

- Parent, other relative, or non-agency guardian placements (Non-agency guardian is an individual that is not a child welfare agency, government entity, or within a certain degree of kinship, that has been appointed under the appropriate state guardianship statute.)

If guardianship is established as a prelude to a non-relative adoption, the guardian shall comply with this compact. If in doubt, request clarification from the Arkansas Interstate Compact Unit, P.O. Box 1437, Slot S567 Little Rock, Arkansas, 72203-1437. Phone: (501) 682-8556.

PROCEDURE VI-G2: Types of Placement Not Covered by ICPC

Types of placements that are not covered by ICPC include:

- A. Divorce or custody investigations involving home studies
- B. Placement of a probationer, parolee, or aftercare juvenile
- C. Interstate placement of children with mental disabilities
- D. Placement into a primarily educational institution
- E. Runaways from Arkansas to another state or to Arkansas from another state. (See Procedure VI G16 about other compacts).
- F. Kidnapped children transported out-of-state
- G. Visits that do not extend beyond 30 days and are not pre-placement visits
- H. Placement outside the resident state when custody will be transferred to that person

PROCEDURE VI-G3: Responsibilities of the Sending State

07/2010

The sending party will:

- A. Provide proper notice of the intent to place using the ICPC-100A (ICPC Request) and receive authorization from the receiving state prior to the placement. The 100A must clearly indicate DCFS is the sending party.
- B. Document in the case file and ICPC packet that potential out-of-state relative placements were offered the option of becoming a paid foster home.
- C. Work with the receiving parties to arrange the placement details (i.e., childcare payment, type of monitoring, frequency of supervisory reports, and transportation) after approval is given.

The sending state shall not recommend that custody be given to the placement resource without completion of at least six months of supervision, and concurrence of the receiving state. Failure to comply with these requirements violates the terms under which the receiving state originally gave placement approval. This could result in the child and placement resource being without essential medical coverage and a request for the child to be returned to the sending state.

- D. Provide additional information when requested by the receiving state to ensure the placement is not “contrary to the interests of the child.”

Any such report from another state, Indian tribe, or private agency under contract with the receiving state, shall meet all requirements imposed by the sending state for the completion of the home study before placing the child in the home. This will be done unless, within fourteen days after receipt of the report,

the sending state determines based on specific grounds in the report that making a decision based on the report would be contrary to the welfare of the child.

- E. Notify the receiving state of the placement date and any change in the child's status by using the ICPC-100B (Report on Child's Placement Status).
- F. Retain jurisdiction over the child sufficient to determine all matters of custody, supervision, care, and disposition of the child until the child is adopted, reaches majority, becomes self-supporting, or is discharged with concurrence of the appropriate authority in the receiving state.
- G. Retain planning and financial responsibility for the duration of the placement and indicate this responsibility on the ICPC-100A.

The one exception comes under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA) requiring that children under title IV-E adoption assistance agreements and those receiving title IV-E foster care payments will be granted Medicaid coverage in their current resident state. (See Medical Services Manual, Section 6600 to 6673.)

- H. Return the child to the sending state at the request of the receiving state.

PROCEDURE VI-G4: Responsibilities of the Receiving State

07/2010

Within sixty days after receiving a request for a home study from another state, the receiving state will directly or by contract:

- A. Assess and monitor the placement to ensure compliance with applicable laws and policies of the receiving state, and that the placement is "not contrary to the interests of the child."
- B. Notify the sending state in writing whether or not the placement is appropriate and in the best interest of the child.

The receiving state is not required to complete those parts of the home study within the designated time period that involve the education and training of the prospective foster or adoptive parents.

- C. Supervise the placement and provide or arrange for necessary services after the child is placed and the ICPC-100B received.
- D. Submit quarterly progress reports to the sending party. More frequent reports may be submitted on request.
- E. Honor and enforce lawful orders of the court of jurisdiction of the sending state unless it conflicts with Arkansas policies and/or laws.

PROCEDURE VI-G5: Placing Arkansas Children in Another State and Requesting Out-of-State Home Studies

07/2010

The following are procedures to use when requesting an out-of-state home study for an Arkansas child, including placement into residential treatment facilities. Always use the child's name on the correspondence.

The sending party (county office, etc.) will follow CFS-6092: ICPC Home Study Request Check List and compile an Interstate Compact Placement Packet consisting of **THREE** copies of each of the following (include **FIVE** copies of ICPC-100A):

- A. Cover Letter (CFS-6092-COVER LETTER) to explain the placement plans.
- B. ICPC-100A: Interstate Compact Placement Request (retain one copy and include five completed, signed, and dated copies with the packet.)
- C. Court order (most recent) showing that DHS has custody or the court has jurisdiction of the child (i.e. adjudication order, recent review order)
- D. Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) for an adoptive home study
- E. ICPC-101: Priority Home Study Request
- F. Current Case Plan (CFS-6010).
- G. Social Summary (CFS-6092-SOCIAL SUMMARY) OR an Adoption Summary if requesting a pre-adoptive placement.
- H. Medical Records / Reports (PACE evaluation, if available), including Immunization Records
- I. School Reports / Records from the past three years, if applicable,
- J. Psychological Evaluations/ Reports and Counseling Reports, if applicable
- K. Financial/Medical Plan (CFS-592)The form must indicate that DCFS is the sending party and will retain financial and planning responsibility for the child.
- L. IV-E Eligibility form (Print screen of CHRIS Foster Care Determination Window.) Financial arrangements should always be discussed with the prospective placement resource before the home study is requested. If a board payment is needed, a foster home study must be requested.
- M. Proof of Citizenship—U.S. Birth Certificate or other birth records. If birth records are not available, you can ask if the client has any other citizenship-related documents such as those listed in Sections 6700, 6703, & 6705 of the following link:
<http://www.arkansas.gov/dhs/webpolicy/Medical%20Services/MS%206700.htm>
- N. Proof of Identity—A Social Security Card, completed application for a duplicate card, or school ID with photo (Per DCFS Eligibility Unit, federal authority will determine other acceptable documents of a child's identity "at a later date.")
- O. Photo of Child or Children—This is not required, but is best practice

Send packet to: ICPC Unit
Donaghey Plaza South
700 Main Street
P.O. Box 1437, Slot S567
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201-1437.

Financial arrangements should be discussed with the prospective placement resource and put in writing before the study is requested. If a board payment is needed, a foster home study must be requested.

The Arkansas ICPC Central Office will:

- A. Review the packet to determine whether or not it is complete and ready to forward to the receiving state's ICPC office.
- B. Coordinate with the sending party if changes in the packet are needed.
- C. Send packet to receiving state's compact office.
- D. Notify sending party of disposition.

The Family Service Worker and/or Area ICPC Liaison will:

- A. Complete and route the ICPC-100B to the ICPC office if the out-of-state placement is approved and made. Show the date of the placement or of the withdrawal of the request.

- B. Close the Arkansas Medicaid so that Medicaid services can be pursued in the receiving state.
- C. Code the CFS-6013: Application for Emergency Services to show ICPC service using the child's name.
- D. Key the case type in CHRIS as "ICPC" for the child placed by the Division in another state.
- E. Notify the Adoption Services Unit of a proposed adoptive placement, if appropriate.
- F. Coordinate the travel plans with the Family Service Worker if placement is approved (placement must be made within six months of placement approval)

Communication between states regarding approval of placements, progress reports, case closures, and disruptions must go through the Arkansas ICPC Central Office.

PROCEDURE VI-G6: Children Entering Arkansas for Placement

Services to children should not begin without a completed home study, placement approval (ICPC-100A) from the receiving state's ICPC office AND receipt of placement notification (ICPC-100B) from the sending state's ICPC office. Requests from sending state should include the same information as described in the Interstate Placement Packet and outlined in Procedure VI-G5. Contact the Arkansas ICPC Central Office if additional information is needed from the sending state to initiate services. Supervision of a placement will not begin until the receiving state obtains ICPC-100B.

PROCEDURE VI-G7: Completion of a Home Study

The Area ICPC Liaison will:

- A. Ensure the completion of
 - 1) Central Registry Check
 - 2) thorough home study, including the results of the Arkansas State Police Criminal Record Check and the FBI Criminal Background Check; if available, with signed recommendation regarding placement within sixty calendar days of a request.

The DCFS Supervisor or Area Director must also make a recommendation for or against placement. If the criminal record checks have not been received, a copy of the application/request must be included in the packet and the results sent when received.

- B. Notify the ICPC Central Office in writing if there is to be a delay.
- C. Include CFS-316: Request for Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check and CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check.

No child shall be placed in the home of a foster parent where a records check reveals a felony conviction for child abuse or neglect, for spousal abuse, for a crime against children (including child pornography), or a crime involving violence, including rape, sexual assault or homicide. No child shall be placed in the home of a foster parent if the record check reveals a criminal conviction for physical assault, battery, or a drug related offense, if the offense was committed within the past five years.

- D. Send the home study to the ICPC Central Office, not directly to the other state.
Any state agency that administers or supervises the administration of a state program operated under such an approved state plan will not be restricted from contracting with a private agency to conduct home studies.

- E. The Adoption Manager must sign and date the recommendation in an adoption home study.

PROCEDURE VI-G8: Routing of a Home Study

ICPC approved home study packets are valid for six months from the date the ICPC Central Office signed the ICPC-100A. The child must be placed within that 6-month period.

The Arkansas ICPC Central Office (Receiving State) will:

- A. Review the home study to determine whether or not it is complete.
- B. If the home study is complete, forward to the sending state's ICPC office.

If Arkansas receives an approved home study from another state, the ICPC Central Office will forward the approved home study and the ICPC-100B to the appropriate ICPC liaison.

The ICPC liaison will forward the approved home study and the ICPC-100A to the assigned caseworker.

The assigned caseworker and/or supervisor will, with the court's concurrence, make a determination as to whether or not placement will be made. When the determination has been made, an ICPC-100B will be prepared and forwarded to the ICPC liaison. The liaison will, within 72 hours of placement, send it to the ICPC Central Office who will forward to the appropriate state.

If the home study is denied, the ICPC Unit will process the denied home study request by forwarding a copy of the following to the appropriate ICPC liaison:

- A. The denied home study
- B. The ICPC-100A which indicates, in Section IV, "placement shall not be made"

The ICPC liaison will forward the documents to the appropriate FSW or supervisor.

The FSW or supervisor will:

- A. File the denied home study and ICPC-100A in the appropriate case file and close the case **OR**,
- B. Appeal the receiving state's denial of the home study by:
 - 1) Preparing a formal request with available supporting documentation to justify why the home study denial should be appealed
 - 2) Forwarding to the immediate supervisor for approval
 - 3) If approved, forwarding to the Area Director for approval
 - 4) If approved, forwarding to the ICPC Central Office

The Arkansas ICPC Central Office will:

- A. Forward a copy of the appeal to the appropriate state's ICPC office for reconsideration of the denied home study.
- B. If the appeal is denied, the FSW must wait a minimum of six months before re-initiation of the home study.

PROCEDURE VI-G9: Follow-up, Routing, and Monitoring

The Family Service Worker in Arkansas will:

- A. Provide monthly supervision of the child and send quarterly progress reports to their ICPC Liaison or as often as requested on the ICPC-100A. The ICPC Liaison will then forward the reports to the ICPC Central Office.

- B. Notify the ICPC Central Office, immediately, if problems or changes with placement occur.
- C. Key the case type in CHRIS as “ICPC” for the child placed in Arkansas from another state.

PROCEDURE VI-G10: Travel Procedures for Children Receiving Out-of-Home Placement Services

When an Arkansas child in foster care has been approved to move into or out of Arkansas for a foster care or adoptive placement, or for reunification with parents, the Family Service Worker/Area ICPC Liaison will:

- A. Submit request for travel to ICPC Central Office with “Application for Out-of-State Travel” (DHS-1010) no less than two weeks in advance. (The ICPC Central Office will be responsible for obtaining approvals for the travel.)
- B. Make necessary travel arrangements through a travel agency approved by DHS.
- C. Submit ICPC-100B to the ICPC Central Office for forwarding to the receiving state after the child is placed in the receiving state.

When an escort (state employee or non-state employee) is needed to assist with transporting an Arkansas child in foster care to or from an out-of-state placement, the Family Service Worker or Area ICPC Liaison will submit the same information as stated above for children in foster care travel. No travel shall commence until the DHS-1010s are signed.

PROCEDURE VI-G11: Other Travel Non-ICPC and Non-DCFS Children

For Non-ICPC travel, the Family Service Worker will:

- A. Request prior approval, using the DHS-1010 for a child and for an escort, as appropriate. (e.g., to attend a funeral, go on vacation with a foster parent or go on a visit of less than thirty days.)
- B. Direct requests and questions to the Foster Care Unit.

Exception: For children placed out-of-state by an Arkansas court, the sending party is responsible for arranging transportation (DHS does not have legal custody).

- C. Forward the DHS-1010 to the Assistant Director of Community Services and the DCFS Director for signature.
- D. Attach the child’s court order giving authority to travel and written documentation from the attorney ad litem.

An out-of-state visit is 30 days or less and is not subject to ICPC. However, if it is greater than 30 days, it is a placement, which is subject to ICPC.

PROCEDURE VI-G12: Progress Reports

The receiving state must:

- A. Send quarterly progress reports every three months unless otherwise stated on the ICPC-100A.
- B. Mail progress reports to ICPC Central Office for forwarding to the sending state.
- C. Enter the progress reports in the child’s case record in CHRIS.

PROCEDURE VI-G13: Termination of ICPC Cases

An Interstate Compact Placement can only be terminated with the concurrence of the receiving state ICPC Office. Reasons for terminating an ICPC placement include the following reasons:

- Adoption finalized
- Child reaches age of majority
- Child legally emancipated
- Legal custody returned to parent(s) or given to relative with a court order
- Treatment completed
- Sending state's jurisdiction terminated with the concurrence of the receiving state
- Unilateral termination
- Child returned to sending state
- Child has moved to another state Proposed placement request withdrawn
- Approved resource will not be used for placement
-

The Family Service Worker will complete ICPC-100B indicating termination reason and route it to the ICPC Central Office for forwarding to the receiving state.

The Arkansas ICPC Central Office will send the ICPC-100B to the sending or receiving state's ICPC office to notify them of the closure of the ICPC case.

The sending state is responsible for the original submission of both the ICPC-100A and 100B.

PROCEDURE VI-G14: Exceptions to Policy

Items and services not specified in this policy must have prior approval of the Interstate Compact Administrator or Deputy Administrator.

The Family Service Worker/Area ICPC Liaison, with the approval of the Area Director, will:

- A. Write a memo to the Interstate Compact Administrator to fully explain the situation.
- B. Request that exceptions to policy be made.

The Arkansas ICPC Administrator will:

- A. Review the request.
- B. Inform the Family Service Worker/Area ICPC Liaison of the decision.

PROCEDURE VI-G15: Request for a Priority Placement Regulation No. 7 in the Guide to the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children

A priority placement is when a court, upon request or on its own motion, or where court approval is required, determines that a proposed priority placement of a child from one state into another state is necessary because:

- A. The child is under two years of age;
- B. The child is in an emergency shelter; or
- C. The court finds that the child has spent a substantial amount of time in the home of the proposed placement recipient.

Regulation No. 7 does not define "substantial amount of time", consequently leaving its interpretation to the receiving state ICPC.

The receiving state agency has thirty days to complete a request for a priority placement. Requests for placement shall not be expedited or given priority except as outlined below.

A request for a priority placement will be implemented as follows:

- A. The court shall send its order to DCFS within two business days.
- B. The order shall include:
 - 1) The child's name, address and phone number;
 - 2) The Fax number of the judge and the court, if available.
 - 3) The sending party will send the following to the state Central Office ICPC via overnight mail, or fax, within three business days:
 - 4) The signed court order. (The court order must specify how the case qualifies as Regulation No. 7.);
 - 5) A completed ICPC-100A (ICPC Placement Request);
 - 6) Supporting documentation according to policy.
- C. Within two business days after the receipt of the ICPC priority placement request, the sending state ICPC office will overnight mail the priority request and its supporting documentation to the receiving state ICPC office with a notice that the request for placement is entitled to priority processing.
- D. The receiving state ICPC office shall send all the documents to the receiving state's local office within two days. The receiving state's local office has twenty working days to send a determination back to the receiving state's ICPC Office.
- E. The receiving ICPC office has two days to overnight mail the determination to the sending state's ICPC office. The sending state ICPC office has two days, through overnight mail, to send the determination to the local office.
- F. The foregoing shall not apply if:
 - 1) Within two business days of receipt of the ICPC priority placement request, the sending state Compact Administrator determines that the ICPC request documentation is substantially insufficient, specifies that additional information is needed, and request the additional documentation from the FSW by FAX or telephone if FAX is not available, or
 - 2) Within two business days of receipt of the ICPC priority placement request, the receiving state Compact Administrator notifies the sending state Compact Administrator that further information is necessary. Such notice shall specifically detail the information needed.

For such a case in which either of the two prior dot points apply, the twenty business day period for the receiving state Compact Administrator to complete action shall be calculated from the date of the receipt by the receiving state Compact Administrator of the additional information requested.

PROCEDURE VI-G16: Juvenile, Mental Health, and Adoption and Medical Assistance Compacts

In addition to the ICPC, three other Interstate Compacts were enacted to coordinate the interstate placements of children and juveniles as follows:

- A. Interstate Compact for Juveniles: This compact is designed to serve those children/youth needing an out-of-state placement who have been adjudicated delinquent and who have been placed on probation or parole. This compact also provides for the return of non-delinquent runaways, escapees, and absconders. This includes foster children/youth who run away and are located out of state. The Interstate Compact for Juveniles is administered by the Division of Youth Services.
- B. Interstate Compact on Mental Health: This compact is designed to facilitate the transfer of resident patients (both children and adults) from a state-operated mental health facility in one state to a similar

state-operated facility in another state. The Mental Health Compact is administered by the Division of Behavioral Health Services.

- C. Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance: This compact is for adoption assistance for IV-E eligible children who are under an adoption subsidy agreement. The adoption worker should notify the Adoption Subsidy Coordinator as soon as it is known that an adoptive family/child is moving out of state or has moved. The Adoption Subsidy Coordinator will send information to the new state of residence and also to the adoptive parents advising them to contact the local Medicaid office in their new state of residence. This contact will be for the purpose of getting medical benefits for their child in the new state of residence.

CLEAN

POLICY VI-M: GUIDELINES FOR INTERDIVISIONAL STAFFINGS AND THE CHILD CASE REVIEW COMMITTEE

07/2010

When a child in DHS custody has serious and complex needs that make placements difficult, a caseworker can refer the child for an interdivisional staffing. The purpose of an interdivisional staffing is to attempt to resolve the child's issues before referring him or her to the Child Case Review Committee (CCRC). An interdivisional staffing must take place before a CCRC is held.

Children referred for Interdivisional Staffings include, but are not limited to, children who:

- A. Are in DHS custody and have significant trouble being placed due to multiple, more serious and/or complex needs.
- B. Have cases needing clarification as to which DHS Division has primary responsibility for the case.
- C. Have cases needing intensive coordination between DHS Divisions, service providers, and/or other community partners in order to connect the children with appropriate services and supports in an effort to help children reach permanency.

An Interdivisional Staffing is comprised of the following individuals:

- A. A representative from the following DHS Divisions– Children and Family Services, Youth Services, Medical Services, Developmental Disabilities Services, Behavioral Health Services, and Office of Chief Counsel
- B. A representative of the Department of Education
- C. Specialized Placement Unit Manager, whose responsibilities include:
 - 1) Coordinating the Interdivisional Staffings
 - 2) Managing contracts
 - 3) Providing technical assistance

Additional Interdivisional Staffing participants may include:

- A. Division representatives who act as referral coordinators within their agencies
- B. The designated caseworker for the child and family
- C. Appropriate service providers
- D. Others needed to develop a suitable plan of service to meet the child's needs

If an Interdivisional Staffing does not result in finding appropriate services and supports for children in DHS custody, then a Child Case Review Committee (CCRC) shall be called. The CCRC serves as the gatekeeper for out-of-state placements for children in DHS custody. The CCRC is ONLY for out-of-state placements. Before a case can be reviewed by the CCRC, the case MUST first be reviewed in an interdivisional staffing.

Children referred to CCRC include, but are not limited to, children who:

- A. Are in DHS custody and have significant trouble being placed due to multiple, more serious and/or complex needs.
- B. Have cases that, despite coordination between DHS Divisions, cannot be assigned as the primary responsibility of one particular division.
- C. Have accessed appropriate in-state resources, but have not had measurable success with those resources.

EXCERPT: DIVISION OF CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES, POLICY & PROCEDURES MANUAL, POLICY VI-M

- D. Have identified needs that cannot be met by the available resources in Arkansas.
- E. Are recommended to receive treatment out-of-state.

The CCRC is comprised of the following members:

- A. Director of the Department of Human Services (Chairman);
- B. The Directors (or designees) of the following DHS Divisions – Children and Family Services, Youth Services, Medical Services, Developmental Disabilities Services, Behavioral Health Services, and Office of Chief Counsel;
- C. A representative of the Department of Education;
- D. CCRC Coordinator (Specialized Placement Unit Manager), whose responsibilities include:
 - 1) Coordinating the CCRC meetings;
 - 2) Managing contracts; and
 - 3) Providing technical assistance.

The CCRC Coordinator does NOT do manage cases or find placements for children.

Additional committee members may include:

- A. Division representatives who act as referral coordinators within their agencies;
- B. The designated caseworker for the child and family;
- C. Appropriate service providers;
- D. Others needed to develop a suitable plan of service to meet the child's needs.

PROCEDURE VI-MI: Interdivisional Staffing Referral Process

When any local Divisional staff member becomes aware of a child who meets the criteria for referral to an interdivisional staffing he or she should contact the County Supervisor, the Area Director, and, where available, the designated Placement Specialist for the Area.

The caseworker will discuss the child's needs with the County Supervisor, the Area Director, and, where available, the Placement Specialist for the Area to verify it is an appropriate referral for an interdivisional staffing.

Children from counties with active CASSP teams should be referred to the appropriate team before the child is considered for referral to an interdivisional staffing.

A referral packet should be submitted to the Manager of the Specialized Placement Unit and shall contain the following information:

- A. Presenting problem
- B. Chronological summary of placements [include reasons for moves and a narrative description of the circumstances and behaviors that led to each move]
- C. Summary of referrals, rejections, and reasons for rejection
- D. Social history:
 - 1) Family
 - 2) Child development
 - 3) Services
- E. Outline the steps taken to locate an appropriate placement
- F. Psychological history include mental health services, testing results and copies of all evaluations

EXCERPT: DIVISION OF CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES, POLICY & PROCEDURES MANUAL, POLICY VI-M

- G. Educational information [include the Individual Educational Plan (IEP) in compliance with PL-49-142 or an explanation why the IEP has been omitted]
- H. Medical history
- I. Permanency plan

If the referral is determined to be inappropriate, the Manager of the Specialized Placement Unit will give the county office specific guidance on how to handle the case.

If the referral is determined to be appropriate for an interdivisional staffing, the Manager of the Specialized Placement Unit will:

- A. Place the case on the agenda for the next interdivisional staffing.
- B. Advise the Division's contact person which people need to attend or be available by conference call for the staffing.

PROCEDURE VI-M2: CCRC Referral Process

If the case has already been reviewed by an interdivisional staffing that did not resolve the child's presenting issues and the referral is determined to be appropriate for the CCRC, the Manager of the Specialized Placement Unit will:

- A. Place the case on the agenda for the next scheduled CCRC meeting (unless an emergency is indicated in the referral material).
- B. Advise the Division's contact person which people need to attend or be available by conference call for the CCRC meeting.

The referring county shall send key staff knowledgeable about all aspects of the case to the CCRC meeting to review details of the case. When a referral is appropriate for the CCRC, the Family Service Worker will:

- A. Contact the Specialized Placement Unit through the SPU Manager.
- B. Collect information for the placement packet.
- C. Create the packet consisting of the following items:
 - 1) Cover memo which includes:
 - a. Family Service Worker's name and title, phone and fax numbers, and supervisor's name;
 - b. Child's name, age, legal status and current location;
 - c. Concise paragraph detailing the reasons for referring the child for placement and when the placement is needed;
 - d. Child's last/current placement and an explanation for the removal;
 - 2) Placement history (give dates) and reason for discharge;
 - 3) Clinical recommendation for placement from the last discharge and previous providers if applicable;
 - 4) A copy of the MAPS from the CASSP staffing;
 - 5) Letters of referral and/or denial;
 - 6) Intelligence quotient (I.Q.). – Full Scale;
 - 7) Psychological testing results (most recent – 1 year old or less);
 - 8) Educational information;
 - 9) Date and reasons the child entered foster care;
 - 10) Case plan and goals.

If the CCRC approves and out-of-state placement in order to best meet a child's needs, the caseworker will be responsible for regular follow-up regarding the placement. The caseworker will forward the follow-up information to the SPU Manager.

EXCERPT: DIVISION OF CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES, POLICY & PROCEDURES MANUAL, POLICY VI-M

PROCEDURE VI-M3: The CCRC Case Review Meeting

The CCRC is scheduled to meet on the first and third Tuesdays of each month from 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. in the DHS-DCFS Central Office Complex, Donaghey Plaza South, 7th and Main, Little Rock, Arkansas. CCRC members will be notified on the Friday before a scheduled meeting.

The following always applies:

- A. Each committee member is expected to attend the meeting or send a designee with the authority to make decisions for their Division.
- B. The SPU Manager will notify Divisions when they have a case on the agenda.
- C. Decisions will be made by majority vote with the Chairman breaking any tie votes.
- D. Dates will be established for the CCRC to be updated on the status of the plan implementation.
- E. Maintain confidentiality. See POLICY I-F: CONFIDENTIALITY.

PROCEDURE VI-M4: Medicaid and Financial Issues

Before a youth is placed in an out-of-state treatment facility due to an emotional disturbance, the Office of Chief Counsel will make and document the following determinations as required by ACA §20-46-106, which will then be reviewed with the SPU Manager:

- A. Whether the youth has been appropriately and accurately diagnosed.
- B. Whether an appropriate treatment facility exists within Arkansas.
- C. Whether there is an appropriate treatment facility in a border state.
- D. Whether the treatment facility being considered has the most appropriate program.
- E. Whether the program requires payment of board, and if so, what is the amount.
- F. Whether the total cost for treatment in the out-of-state facility exceeds the cost of treatment in Arkansas.
- G. Where youth at the facility attend school, and whether the school is accredited.
- H. What type of professional staff is available at the facility.
- I. What mechanisms are in place to address problems that are not within the purview of the program.
- J. What other considerations exist, in addition to the youth's emotional problems, such as other medical conditions, travel expenses, wishes of the youth, best interests of the youth, effect of out-of-state placement on the youth, and proximity to the youth's family.
- K. What alternatives exist to out-of-state placement, and the benefits and detriments of each alternative.

If a child in DHS custody is placed in an out-of-state placement without proper documentation, or CCRC authorization as outlined above, Medicaid will not approve a Certificate of Need and authorization to pay the provider/facility for services will be refused.

The information collected by the above determinations shall be included in the youth's case file. The information shall be reviewed and considered by the juvenile judge.

**POLICY VI-M: GUIDELINES FOR INTERDIVISIONAL STAFFINGS
AND THE CHILD CASE REVIEW COMMITTEE**

07/2010

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PROCEDURE VI-M4: Medicaid and Financial Issues

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- A. Whether the youth has been appropriately and accurately diagnosed.
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- C. Whether there is an appropriate treatment facility in a border state.
- D. Whether the treatment facility being considered has the most appropriate program.
- E. Whether the program requires payment of board, and if so, what is the amount.
- F. Whether the total cost for treatment in the out-of-state facility exceeds the cost of treatment in Arkansas.
- G. Where youth at the facility attend school, and whether the school is accredited.
- H. What type of professional staff is available at the facility.
- I. What mechanisms are in place to address problems that are not within the purview of the program.
- J. What other considerations exist, in addition to the youth's emotional problems, such as other medical conditions, travel expenses, wishes of the youth, best interests of the youth, effect of out-of-state placement on the youth, and proximity to the youth's family.
- K. What alternatives exist to out-of-state placement, and the benefits and detriments of each alternative.

If a child in DHS custody is placed in an out-of-state placement without proper documentation, or CCRC authorization as outlined above, Medicaid will not approve a Certificate of Need and authorization to pay the provider/facility for services will be refused.

The information collected by the above determinations shall be included in the youth's case file. The information shall be reviewed and considered by the juvenile judge.

POLICY IX-D: DRIVER'S LICENSE AND INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAMS FOR YOUTH IN OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT

In accordance with A.C.A. § 27-16-702 (a) (1) (D), YouthDCFS Director may authorize an employee of the Department or the foster parent to sign the youth's application. The youth in out-of-home placement shall be able to meet all state requirements listed in A.C.A. § 27-16-804 (Restricted licenses, learner's licenses, and intermediate licenses):

- (1) Be at least sixteen years of age;
- (2) Have tested uncorrected visual acuity of at least 20/40 OR 20/50 with corrective lenses;
- (3) Have tested field of vision of at least 140 degrees with two functioning eyes OR 105 degrees with one functioning eye; and
- (4) Be free of a serious accident and conviction of a serious traffic violation in the last twelve months.

In addition, DCFS must be provided with the following information that will be used to determine whether the Division Director will authorize an employee or foster parent to sign for a driver's license for a youth in out-of-home placement:

- (1) Delinquent acts and history of behavior;
- (2) A minimum 2.0 [C] grade point average, OR record of regular attendance AND satisfactory progress in an adult education program, OR documentation of compliance with an Individual Education Plan;
- (3) DCFS review and acceptance of the driving history and record of violations over the last twelve months;
- (4) Placement stability;
- (5) Enrollment of the youth in the Chafee Foster Care Independent Living Program (ILP) by the FSW; and
- (6) Other pertinent information deemed necessary.

Participating in the DCFS Foster Care Driver's License Program and Driving Insurance Reimbursement Program is a privilege, not an entitlement, requiring compliance with both Arkansas state laws and DCFS policy. Any youth, age sixteen or older, who is in DHS custody, may request permission to obtain a driver's license and be reimbursed for insurance. Completion of a driver's education course is not a requirement. If a foster parent elects to have the youth participate in one, DCFS funds may be utilized to pay enrollment or tuition fees on a reimbursement basis.

Youth who remain in care past the age of 18, do not need approval to apply for a driver's license.

DRIVER'S LICENSE PRIVILEGE

In order to maintain the privilege of driving, the youth in out-of-home placement shall abide by the following:

- (1) Operate a motor vehicle on public streets and highways only when all passengers are wearing their seat belts.
- (2) Not use a cell phone or any other electronic device that may distract the driver;
- (3) Not transport anyone under eighteen years of age without licensed adult (21 years of age or older) supervision in the vehicle;

DCFS will monitor the following items when a youth in out-of-home placement has a driver's license:

- (1) The youth's driving record

- (2) The youth's behavior
- (3) The youth's school performance
- (4) Compliance with state law and DCFS requirements as outlined above.

The Division Director may cancel the authorization for the driver's license. State law permits the Arkansas Office of Driver's Services to cancel, revoke or suspend any learner's permit or driver's license upon request. If at any time, the youth in out-of-home placement no longer meets all of the state and DCFS requirements, the Division may take possession of the youth's learner's permit or driver's license until all requirements are again met.

If a youth enters foster care with a valid learner's permit or driver's license from any state, maintaining possession of that license is subject to meeting all state and DCFS requirements. The youth must complete the CFS-388: Application and Agreement to Participate in DCFS Foster Care Driver's License Program with all of the required attachments indicating that the youth already has a driver's license and submit the form, attachments as outlined above, and a copy of the driver's license. Upon review, the Division Director or designee may determine that the youth can continue to drive and will authorize the youth to keep possession of the driver's license. If the Division Director or designee denies the request to keep the driver's license, the FSW shall obtain possession of the driver's license and the youth will not be able to drive. DCFS will notify the appropriate state Office of Driver Services to cancel the driver's license.

INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM FOR YOUTH IN OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT

Any motor vehicle a youth operates must be owned by the foster parent or the youth. A youth in out-of-home placement **MUST** be insured to drive a specific vehicle before he or she is allowed to operate that motor vehicle, and the youth **MUST** be included as a driver on the insurance policy for that specific vehicle. The insurance policy must meet minimum Arkansas motor vehicle liability standards or DCFS requirements, if higher, as determined by OCC. The Division will reimburse foster parents for the actual amount of the additional cost of adding a specific youth in foster care as a driver on the insurance policy for a specific motor vehicle. The foster parent must present documentation from the insurance company of the actual amount of the additional cost to qualify for reimbursement. If the youth owns his or her own car, he or she must present documentation of the cost of the policy that insures them. The Division will reimburse the youth for the actual amount of the insurance policy. All reimbursement requests will be reviewed and approved by the DCFS Director or designee.

REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM

The minimum requirements to participate in the Division's Insurance Reimbursement Program are approval and permission to participate in the Driver's License Program for youth in out-of-home placement.

When participating in the Insurance Reimbursement Program, the youth agrees to give the Division authority to take possession of their driver's license, suspend driving and insurance reimbursement privileges, and to petition the Arkansas Revenue Office for revocation of their driver's license.

The Division will monitor the driving record, behavior, and school performance of all youth in DHS custody who have elected to participate in the Division's Insurance Reimbursement Program. If at any time, the youth no longer meets all of the state and DCFS requirements, the Division may elect to discontinue reimbursing the foster parents or the youth for the actual costs of insuring the youth.

PROCEDURE IX-DI: Driver's License Program for Youth in Out-of-Home Placement

The Family Service Worker will:

- A. Provide written notification to every youth in out-of-home placement age 16 or older, that they may submit a request to DCFS for permission to apply for an Arkansas Learner's or Intermediate Driver's License as appropriate
- B. Advise the youth and their foster parents of criteria to be considered by DCFS in determining whether to approve a request for an Arkansas Learner's or Intermediate Driver's License.
- C. Provide the youth with a copy of CFS-388: Application & Agreement to Participate in DCFS Foster Care Driver's License Program.
- D. Assist OR arrange for the foster parent or other adult approved by the County Supervisor or Area Director to assist the youth in completing and submitting the CFS-388 along with all required documentation which includes:
 - 1) A written statement covering placement stability
 - 2) The youth's report card or school transcript showing cumulative and current GPA, OR record of regular attendance and satisfactory progress in an adult education program, OR documentation of compliance with the individual education plan; the youth making the application must obtain the appropriate official document from the appropriate authority
 - 3) Statement of behavior history; the FSW must review and write a statement concerning the youth behavior over the last six months
 - 4) Proof of participation in ILP; the FSW must attach proof of the youth's enrollment in the ILP program. If the youth isn't already enrolled, the FSW must enroll the applicant and attach proof of enrollment.
- E. If requested, assist the youth and foster parent in
 - 1) Finding a state approved driver's education program
 - 2) Arranging DCFS reimbursement funding for any reasonable driver's education program cost if the location is reasonably accessible by the youth.
- F. Compile the original CFS-388 and supporting documents into a packet and document in CHRIS
- G. Submit the packet to the County Supervisor
- H. Ensure the youth is enrolled in the ILP. If not, the FSW must enroll the youth in ILP
- I. File a copy of the CFS-388 and supporting documents in the foster care record and provide copies to the foster parent and youth
- J. If approved, assist OR arrange for the foster parent to take the youth to an Arkansas Revenue Office

The Youth in out-of-home placement will:

- A. Inform the foster parent or FSW that he or she wants to obtain an Arkansas Learner's or Intermediate Driver's License
- B. Meet all DCFS criteria before applying for a learner's or intermediate driver's license
- C. Work with the FSW, foster parent, and/or other approved adult to complete and submit the CFS-388 and supporting documents. It will be the youth's responsibility to request and obtain the appropriate academic records and documents

The Foster Parents will:

- A. Document on the CFS-388 if they are willing to support the youth's application for an Arkansas learner's or intermediate driver's license;
- B. Assist the youth in completing and submitting the CFS-388 and supporting documents, if needed
- C. Transport the youth to and from the state approved driver's education program as needed;
- D. Sign any needed documents not signed by the FSW or youth

The DCFS County Supervisor will:

- A. Review the CFS-388 and supporting documents for completeness and prepare the Request Packet
- B. Forward the Request Packet to the Area Director for review and certification

The DCFS Area Director will:

- A. Review the packet, certify its completeness and accuracy and recommend approval or disapproval
- B. Document the approval or disapproval in CHRIS
- C. Forward the packet to Central Office Vehicle Safety Coordinator

The DCFS Vehicle Safety Coordinator will:

- A. Check the youth's driving record if any, and document any traffic violations and/or at-fault accidents
- B. Add appropriate documentation to the packet and forward it to the Director or designee for approval or disapproval.

The Director or designee will

- A. Review the packet and approve or disapprove the youth's request.
- B. If the youth is approved to obtain a driver's license, the Director or designee will send a notarized letter designating the person authorized to sign the application. The youth will take the notarized letter to the Arkansas Driver's License Office.

PROCEDURE IX-D2: Insurance Reimbursement Program for Youth in Out-of-Home Placement

The Family Service Worker will:

- A. Check if the youth has a valid driver's license and submit required documentation
- B. Advise the youth and foster parents that motor vehicle liability insurance is required before the youth is allowed to operate any specific motor vehicle
- C. Advise the youth and the foster parents that they may submit CFS-389: Application & Agreement to Participate in DCFS Foster Care Driving Insurance Reimbursement Program along with all required documentation which includes:
 - 1) A copy of the foster parents' insurance policy listing the youth as an insured driver and delineating the actual additional premium increase OR
 - 2) A copy of the youth's insurance policy including the actual cost

- D. Ensure that everyone has completed their part of the CFS-388 and CFS-389, that the original forms are filed in the foster case record, and that the youth and foster parents each have a copy
- E. Ensure that the youth and the foster parents understand the program and answer any questions they may have
- F. Submit the completed CFS-388 and CFS-389 to the County Supervisor for review and approval
- G. Ensure that a copy of proof of insurance regarding each specific vehicle is received from the foster parents or the youth if they own their own car and filed in the case file before the youth is allowed to operate that motor vehicle;
- H. Ensure that the foster parents or youth are reimbursed for the actual amount of additional costs of adding a specific youth to the insurance policy of a specific motor vehicle
- I. Monitor the youth's driving record for current and continued compliance with all state and DCFS requirements;
- J. Take possession of and hold the youth's driver's license, as soon as practical, following any ticketed traffic violation, at-fault motor vehicle accident, or other legal problem involving the youth as a driver, or whenever the youth no longer meets the state's requirements.

The Youth in out-of-home placement will:

- A. Sign the CFS-389
- B. If the youth owns a vehicle, provide DCFS with proof of insurance covering the youth and his or her specific vehicle
- C. If the youth owns a vehicle, provide DCFS with documentation of the actual additional cost of insuring the youth when claiming reimbursement
- D. Carry his or her driver's license when operating any motor vehicle
- E. Follow all state motor vehicle laws
- F. Abide by all Division guidelines and program requirements
- G. Immediately report any traffic ticket received or motor vehicle accident in which they are involved in as a driver to the foster parents or FSW and give their license to the foster parent or FSW until the situation can be reviewed

Youth who remain in care past the age of 18 will work with their FSW or ILP sponsor to complete the required documents.

The Foster Parents will:

- A. Insure the youth for each specific motor vehicle that he or she will be allowed to operate
- B. Provide DCFS with proof of insurance covering the youth on each specific vehicle;
- C. Provide DCFS with documentation of the actual additional costs of insuring the youth when claiming reimbursement
- D. Immediately report to the FSW any traffic ticket received by the youth or motor vehicle accident in which they are involved as a driver
- E. Immediately take possession of the youth's driver's license, and give it to the FSW as soon as practical, following any ticketed traffic violation or motor vehicle accident involving the youth as a driver.

The DCFS County Supervisor will:

- A. Review CFS-388 and CFS-389 and supporting documents for completeness
- B. Forward the packet to the Area Director for review and certification

- C. Notify the Division Director's office when a youth's driver's license has been taken because of a ticketed traffic violation, at-fault motor vehicle accident, or other legal problem involving the youth as a driver so that the youth's driving privileges can be reviewed.

The DCFS Area Director will:

- A. Review the packet, certify its completeness and accuracy and recommend approval or disapproval
- B. Document the approval or disapproval in CHRIS
- C. Forward the packet to Central Office

The Division Director or designee will review the packet and approve or disapprove the youth's request.

POLICY IX-D: DRIVER'S LICENSE AND INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAMS FOR YOUTH IN OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT

In accordance with A.C.A. § 27-16-702 (a) (1) (D), DCFS Director may authorize an employee of the Department or the foster parent to sign the youth's application. The youth in out-of-home placement shall be able to meet all state requirements listed in A.C.A. § 27-16-804 (Restricted licenses, learner's licenses, and intermediate licenses):

- (1) Be at least sixteen years of age;
- (2) Have tested uncorrected visual acuity of at least 20/40 OR 20/50 with corrective lenses;
- (3) Have tested field of vision of at least 140 degrees with two functioning eyes OR 105 degrees with one functioning eye; and
- (4) Be free of a serious accident and conviction of a serious traffic violation in the last twelve months.

In addition, DCFS must be provided with the following information that will be used to determine whether the Division Director will authorize an employee or foster parent to sign for a driver's license for a youth in out-of-home placement:

- (1) Delinquent acts and history of behavior;
- (2) A minimum 2.0 [C] grade point average, OR record of regular attendance AND satisfactory progress in an adult education program, OR documentation of compliance with an Individual Education Plan;
- (3) DCFS review and acceptance of the driving history and record of violations over the last twelve months;
- (4) Placement stability;
- (5) Enrollment of the youth in the Chafee Foster Care Independent Living Program (ILP) by the FSW; and
- (6) Other pertinent information deemed necessary.

Participating in the DCFS Foster Care Driver's License Program and Driving Insurance Reimbursement Program is a privilege, not an entitlement, requiring compliance with both Arkansas state laws and DCFS policy. Any youth, age sixteen or older, who is in DHS custody, may request permission to obtain a driver's license and be reimbursed for insurance. Completion of a driver's education course is not a requirement. If a foster parent elects to have the youth participate in one, DCFS funds may be utilized to pay enrollment or tuition fees on a reimbursement basis.

Youth who remain in care past the age of 18, do not need approval to apply for a driver's license.

DRIVER'S LICENSE PRIVILEGE

In order to maintain the privilege of driving, the youth in out-of-home placement shall abide by the following:

- (1) Operate a motor vehicle on public streets and highways only when all passengers are wearing their seat belts.
- (2) Not use a cell phone or any other electronic device that may distract the driver;
- (3) Not transport anyone under eighteen years of age without licensed adult (21 years of age or older) supervision in the vehicle;

DCFS will monitor the following items when a youth in out-of-home placement has a driver's license:

- (1) The youth's driving record

- (2) The youth's behavior
- (3) The youth's school performance
- (4) Compliance with state law and DCFS requirements as outlined above.

The Division Director may cancel the authorization for the driver's license. State law permits the Arkansas Office of Driver's Services to cancel, revoke or suspend any learner's permit or driver's license upon request. If at any time, the youth in out-of-home placement no longer meets all of the state and DCFS requirements, the Division may take possession of the youth's learner's permit or driver's license until all requirements are again met.

If a youth enters foster care with a valid learner's permit or driver's license from any state, maintaining possession of that license is subject to meeting all state and DCFS requirements. The youth must complete the CFS-388: Application and Agreement to Participate in DCFS Foster Care Driver's License Program with all of the required attachments indicating that the youth already has a driver's license and submit the form, attachments as outlined above, and a copy of the driver's license. Upon review, the Division Director or designee may determine that the youth can continue to drive and will authorize the youth to keep possession of the driver's license. If the Division Director or designee denies the request to keep the driver's license, the FSW shall obtain possession of the driver's license and the youth will not be able to drive. DCFS will notify the appropriate state Office of Driver Services to cancel the driver's license.

INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM FOR YOUTH IN OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT

Any motor vehicle a youth operates must be owned by the foster parent or the youth. A youth in out-of-home placement **MUST** be insured to drive a specific vehicle before he or she is allowed to operate that motor vehicle, and the youth **MUST** be included as a driver on the insurance policy for that specific vehicle. The insurance policy must meet minimum Arkansas motor vehicle liability standards or DCFS requirements, if higher, as determined by OCC. The Division will reimburse foster parents for the actual amount of the additional cost of adding a specific youth in foster care as a driver on the insurance policy for a specific motor vehicle. The foster parent must present documentation from the insurance company of the actual amount of the additional cost to qualify for reimbursement. If the youth owns his or her own car, he or she must present documentation of the cost of the policy that insures them. The Division will reimburse the youth for the actual amount of the insurance policy. All reimbursement requests will be reviewed and approved by the DCFS Director or designee.

REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM

The minimum requirements to participate in the Division's Insurance Reimbursement Program are approval and permission to participate in the Driver's License Program for youth in out-of-home placement.

When participating in the Insurance Reimbursement Program, the youth agrees to give the Division authority to take possession of their driver's license, suspend driving and insurance reimbursement privileges, and to petition the Arkansas Revenue Office for revocation of their driver's license.

The Division will monitor the driving record, behavior, and school performance of all youth in DHS custody who have elected to participate in the Division's Insurance Reimbursement Program. If at any time, the youth no longer meets all of the state and DCFS requirements, the Division may elect to discontinue reimbursing the foster parents or the youth for the actual costs of insuring the youth.

PROCEDURE IX-DI: Driver's License Program for Youth in Out-of-Home Placement

The Family Service Worker will:

- A. Provide written notification to every youth in out-of-home placement age 16 or older, that they may submit a request to DCFS for permission to apply for an Arkansas Learner's or Intermediate Driver's License as appropriate
- B. Advise the youth and their foster parents of criteria to be considered by DCFS in determining whether to approve a request for an Arkansas Learner's or Intermediate Driver's License.
- C. Provide the youth with a copy of CFS-388: Application & Agreement to Participate in DCFS Foster Care Driver's License Program.
- D. Assist OR arrange for the foster parent or other adult approved by the County Supervisor or Area Director to assist the youth in completing and submitting the CFS-388 along with all required documentation which includes:
 - 1) A written statement covering placement stability
 - 2) The youth's report card or school transcript showing cumulative and current GPA, OR record of regular attendance and satisfactory progress in an adult education program, OR documentation of compliance with the individual education plan; the youth making the application must obtain the appropriate official document from the appropriate authority
 - 3) Statement of behavior history; the FSW must review and write a statement concerning the youth behavior over the last six months
 - 4) Proof of participation in ILP; the FSW must attach proof of the youth's enrollment in the ILP program. If the youth isn't already enrolled, the FSW must enroll the applicant and attach proof of enrollment.
- E. If requested, assist the youth and foster parent in
 - 1) Finding a state approved driver's education program
 - 2) Arranging DCFS reimbursement funding for any reasonable driver's education program cost if the location is reasonably accessible by the youth.
- F. Compile the original CFS-388 and supporting documents into a packet and document in CHRIS
- G. Submit the packet to the County Supervisor
- H. Ensure the youth is enrolled in the ILP. If not, the FSW must enroll the youth in ILP
- I. File a copy of the CFS-388 and supporting documents in the foster care record and provide copies to the foster parent and youth
- J. If approved, assist OR arrange for the foster parent to take the youth to an Arkansas Revenue Office

The Youth in out-of-home placement will:

- A. Inform the foster parent or FSW that he or she wants to obtain an Arkansas Learner's or Intermediate Driver's License
- B. Meet all DCFS criteria before applying for a learner's or intermediate driver's license
- C. Work with the FSW, foster parent, and/or other approved adult to complete and submit the CFS-388 and supporting documents. It will be the youth's responsibility to request and obtain the appropriate academic records and documents

The Foster Parents will:

- A. Document on the CFS-388 if they are willing to support the youth's application for an Arkansas learner's or intermediate driver's license;
- B. Assist the youth in completing and submitting the CFS-388 and supporting documents, if needed
- C. Transport the youth to and from the state approved driver's education program as needed;
- D. Sign any needed documents not signed by the FSW or youth

The DCFS County Supervisor will:

- A. Review the CFS-388 and supporting documents for completeness and prepare the Request Packet
- B. Forward the Request Packet to the Area Director for review and certification

The DCFS Area Director will:

- A. Review the packet, certify its completeness and accuracy and recommend approval or disapproval
- B. Document the approval or disapproval in CHRIS
- C. Forward the packet to Central Office Vehicle Safety Coordinator

The DCFS Vehicle Safety Coordinator will:

- A. Check the youth's driving record if any, and document any traffic violations and/or at-fault accidents
- B. Add appropriate documentation to the packet and forward it to the Director or designee for approval or disapproval.

The Director or designee will

- A. Review the packet and approve or disapprove the youth's request.
- B. If the youth is approved to obtain a driver's license, the Director or designee will send a notarized letter designating the person authorized to sign the application. The youth will take the notarized letter to the Arkansas Driver's License Office.

PROCEDURE IX-D2: Insurance Reimbursement Program for Youth in Out-of-Home Placement

The Family Service Worker will:

- A. Check if the youth has a valid driver's license and submit required documentation
- B. Advise the youth and foster parents that motor vehicle liability insurance is required before the youth is allowed to operate any specific motor vehicle
- C. Advise the youth and the foster parents that they may submit CFS-389: Application & Agreement to Participate in DCFS Foster Care Driving Insurance Reimbursement Program along with all required documentation which includes:
 - 1) A copy of the foster parents' insurance policy listing the youth as an insured driver and delineating the actual additional premium increase OR
 - 2) A copy of the youth's insurance policy including the actual cost

- D. Ensure that everyone has completed their part of the CFS-388 and CFS-389, that the original forms are filed in the foster case record, and that the youth and foster parents each have a copy
- E. Ensure that the youth and the foster parents understand the program and answer any questions they may have
- F. Submit the completed CFS-388 and CFS-389 to the County Supervisor for review and approval
- G. Ensure that a copy of proof of insurance regarding each specific vehicle is received from the foster parents or the youth if they own their own car and filed in the case file before the youth is allowed to operate that motor vehicle;
- H. Ensure that the foster parents or youth are reimbursed for the actual amount of additional costs of adding a specific youth to the insurance policy of a specific motor vehicle
- I. Monitor the youth's driving record for current and continued compliance with all state and DCFS requirements;
- J. Take possession of and hold the youth's driver's license, as soon as practical, following any ticketed traffic violation, at-fault motor vehicle accident, or other legal problem involving the youth as a driver, or whenever the youth no longer meets the state's requirements.

The Youth in out-of-home placement will:

- A. Sign the CFS-389
- B. If the youth owns a vehicle, provide DCFS with proof of insurance covering the youth and his or her specific vehicle
- C. If the youth owns a vehicle, provide DCFS with documentation of the actual additional cost of insuring the youth when claiming reimbursement
- D. Carry his or her driver's license when operating any motor vehicle
- E. Follow all state motor vehicle laws
- F. Abide by all Division guidelines and program requirements
- G. Immediately report any traffic ticket received or motor vehicle accident in which they are involved in as a driver to the foster parents or FSW and give their license to the foster parent or FSW until the situation can be reviewed

Youth who remain in care past the age of 18 will work with their FSW or ILP sponsor to complete the required documents.

The Foster Parents will:

- A. Insure the youth for each specific motor vehicle that he or she will be allowed to operate
- B. Provide DCFS with proof of insurance covering the youth on each specific vehicle;
- C. Provide DCFS with documentation of the actual additional costs of insuring the youth when claiming reimbursement
- D. Immediately report to the FSW any traffic ticket received by the youth or motor vehicle accident in which they are involved as a driver
- E. Immediately take possession of the youth's driver's license, and give it to the FSW as soon as practical, following any ticketed traffic violation or motor vehicle accident involving the youth as a driver.

The DCFS County Supervisor will:

- A. Review CFS-388 and CFS-389 and supporting documents for completeness
- B. Forward the packet to the Area Director for review and certification

- C. Notify the Division Director's office when a youth's driver's license has been taken because of a ticketed traffic violation, at-fault motor vehicle accident, or other legal problem involving the youth as a driver so that the youth's driving privileges can be reviewed.

The DCFS Area Director will:

- A. Review the packet, certify its completeness and accuracy and recommend approval or disapproval
- B. Document the approval or disapproval in CHRIS
- C. Forward the packet to Central Office

The Division Director or designee will review the packet and approve or disapprove the youth's request.

CLEAN