



Florida Department of Children and Families
Independent Living Transition Services
Oversight Activities for Outcome Measures for CBC's
January 2012

I. Background

Section 409.1451 requires the Department to administer a system of independent living transition services to enable older children in foster care and young adults who exit foster care at age 18 to make the transition to self-sufficiency as adults. The goals of independent living transition services are to assist older children in foster care and young adults who were formerly in foster care to obtain life skills and education for independent living and employment, to have a quality of life appropriate for their age, and to assume personal responsibility for becoming self-sufficient adults. Florida's Independent Living Transition Services Program is provided through to nineteen community-based care lead agencies.

II. Purpose

This report provides information required by sub section 409.1451(6), F. S. as follows:

1. An analysis of performance on the outcome measures developed under this section reported for each community-based care lead agency and compared with the performance of the Department on the same measures.
2. A description of the Department's oversight of the program, including, by lead agency, any programmatic or fiscal deficiencies found, corrective actions required and current status of compliance.
3. Any rules adopted or proposed under this section since the last report. For the purposes of the first report, any rules adopted or proposed under this section must be included."

The majority of activities described in this report occurred during the period January through December 2011 unless otherwise noted.

Oversight of Florida's Independent Living Transition Services Program is also provided by the Independent Living Services Advisory Council (ILSAC) which was created by the Florida Legislature for the "purpose of reviewing and making recommendations concerning the implementation and operation of the independent living transition services."

III. Outcome Measures for Community-Based Care Lead Agencies

National Youth in Transition Database

In February 2008, the final federal rule for the Chafee National Youth in Transition Database was promulgated. The National Youth in Transition Database, commonly referred to as NYTD, requires states to provide for youth to report their own perceptions of the services provided to them. Additionally, each state must report on all services provided to youth in foster care and young adults formerly in foster care every six months in the following areas: academic support; post-secondary educational support; career preparation; employment programs or vocational trainings; budget and financial management; housing education and home management training; health education and risk prevention; family support and healthy marriage education; mentoring; and supervised independent living. Failure to comply with federal minimum National Youth in

Transition Database survey requirements could result in the imposition of federal penalties. In 2011 the Department was found to be compliant with the National Youth in Transitions data requirements and met all current established federal requirements in this area.

General Overview of My Services (former Independent Living Transitional Services Critical Checklist), National Youth in Transition Database

In 2011 the Department of Children and Families entered into a contract with a private vendor to begin providing the Department with survey collection and analysis services for teens currently residing in the foster care system as well as young adults that have aged out of the foster care system. The decision to contract for these types of services was in large part driven by federal requirements and possible federal financial penalties associated with National Youth in Transition Database (NYDT) requirements that a minimum number of young adults that have aged out of the foster care system be interviewed on biannual basis.

After careful consideration, it was determined that a contracted vendor would provide the Department with the best performance in the areas of locating/tracking, surveying and collating survey results for both current foster care teens and for young adults that have aged out of the foster care system. It was also determined that the acquisition of contracted survey collection and data analysis services offered an excellent opportunity to improve upon the Independent Living Transitional Services Critical Checklist.

My Services Survey

The My Services survey tool is a new annual online survey that is given to teens that are currently residing in the Florida foster care system and it has replaced the Independent Living Transitional Services Critical Checklist as the Department and community-based care lead agencies primary tool for reviewing and analyzing how teens view the overall quality of services delivered by the Florida Foster Care System. The three (3) age specific surveys that make up the My Services online surveys were developed by the Department in conjunction with community-based care lead agencies and Connectedby25. The My Services surveys now provide the Department and community-based care agencies with the ability to collect direct customer service level data on how teens that are currently residing in the foster care view both the quality and overall scope of services that are being provided to them through an online process. And the development of this online tool has been a significant improvement over the pen and paper process that was associated with the Independent Living Transitional Services Critical Checklist.

Links to the each of the three (3) My Services age specific questionnaires are provided below.

Ages Thirteen (13) to Fourteen (14)

http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/cbc/docs/2011_12/Independent%20Living%20-%20My%20Services%20Florida%20Questions%20Ages%2013-1.pdf

Ages Fifteen (15) to Sixteen (16)

http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/cbc/docs/2011_12/Independent%20Living%20-%20My%20Services%20Florida%20Questions%20Ages%2015-1.pdf

Age Seventeen (17)

http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/cbc/docs/2011_12/Independent%20Living%20-%20My%20Services%20Florida%20Questions%20Ages%2017%20%20.pdf

The fall 2011 My Services survey was just completed and over 1,500 teens that are currently residing in foster care system participated in the process. Data analysis of the survey results are currently being conducted and a finalized report outlining findings should be posted to the Florida Department of Children and Families Independent Living web site by spring 2012 (see link below).

Florida Department of Children and Families Independent Living Web Site
<http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/inliving/>

The introduction of the My Services survey tool offers the Department and community-based care lead agencies with an excellent opportunity to being the process of aggressively analyzing which required Independent Living services are being delivered to foster care teens and perhaps more importantly if foster care teens view these services as being valuable and helpful as work towards transitioning into toward becoming successful young adults.

IV. Departmental Oversight

For calendar year 2011, the Department provided oversight of independent living services through a two part system. The Department's Contract Oversight Unit was responsible for monitoring the community-based care lead agencies' compliance with ss. 409.1451, F.S., and Florida Administrative Code, 65C-31, Services to Young Adults Formerly in the Custody of the Department. The Department's Quality Assurance System includes requirements for case file reviews to assess the delivery of services for children in the child welfare system.

- a. **Contract Oversight:** The Contract Oversight Unit randomly selected cases of youth eligible to receive independent living services and young adults formerly in foster care and conducted a file review to determine if the requirements in Florida Statute and Florida Administrative Code were met. This included a review of eligibility requirements for these services. Deficiencies in cases or areas of concern with the delivery of independent living services were noted in reports prepared and submitted to the Department's contract managers and Department leadership. The contract managers determined if the area of deficiency warranted a corrective action plan (CAP). If a CAP was necessary to address concerns, the community-based care lead agency was required to develop steps and processes to bring services into compliance with federal regulations, Florida Statute, Florida Administrative Code, and the contract.

Table 1 summarizes the monitoring of the community-based care lead agencies for the 2011 calendar year, and the action taken by the Department to address deficiencies.

Table 1: Contract Oversight Results of the Independent Living Program by Community-Based Care Lead Agency				
Circuit	CBC	Contract	Finding	Corrective Action Plan Status
3, 8	Partnership for Strong Families	CJ809	IL requirements not met.	Corrective Action Plan is in Place.
4	Family Support Services of North Florida	DJ031	Some IL requirements not met.	Corrective Action Plan not needed.
4	Clay Baker Kids Incorporated	DJ035	Some IL requirements not met.	Corrective Action Plan is in Place.
7	Family Integrity Program	NJ204	Some IL requirements not met.	Corrective Action Plan not needed.
11	Our Kids of Miami-Dade-Monroe, Inc.	KJ114	Some IL requirements not met.	Corrective Action Plan is in place.
17	ChildNet, Inc	JJ212	IL requirements were not met.	Corrective Action Plan is in place.
19	United for Families, Inc.	ZJK84	Some IL requirements not met.	Corrective Action Plan is in place.
20	Children's Network of Southwest Florida	HJ90R	IL requirements not met.	Corrective Action Plan is in place.

- b. **Quality Assurance:** The Department's quality assurance system provides uniform Quality of Practice Standards for ongoing service provision by case management organizations. Data collected in reviewing these standards or measures performance; provides local administrations a "window into practice" in real-time, and helps focus quality improvement efforts at the local and state level. Table 2 provides the statewide summary of performance on independent living standards. Individual reports by community-based care lead agency can be found at: http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/qa/QA_Reports/Forms/AllItems.aspx

Table 2			
Item #	Quality Assurance Standard	FY 2009/2010	FY 2010/2011
44	If the case involves a youth who has reached 13 but not yet 15 years of age and he/she is living in a licensed, out-of-home care placement, a pre-independent living assessment was completed that identified service needs and services were provided. (applicable to licensed out-of-home care cases)	78%	87%
45	If the child is 13 years of age or older and in licensed foster care, the case management agency provided guidance and assistance in developing an educational and career path that is based on the child's individual abilities and interests. (applicable to licensed out-of-home care cases)	78%	79%
46	The teen-aged focus child is afforded opportunities to participate in normal life skills activities in the foster home and community that are reasonable and appropriate for his/her respective age or special needs. (applicable to licensed out-of-home care cases)	76%	72%
47	For youth 15 years of age but not yet 18, the agency appropriately monitored his/her progress towards successfully transitioning from foster care to independence through regular informative staffings.	78%	79%

c. **Fiscal Oversight:** As required by ss. 409.1451(5), F.S., each community-based care lead agency submitted a plan to the Department in September 2011 addressing the following major components for the population of young adults formerly in foster care. These plans contain the following elements:

- The number of young adults to be served each month of the fiscal year;
- The number of young adults who will reach 18 years of age who will be eligible for the plan;
- The number of young adults who will reach 23 years of age and will be ineligible for the plan or who are otherwise ineligible during each month of the fiscal year;
- Staffing requirements and all related costs to administer the services and program;
- Payment to, or expenditures on behalf of, the eligible recipients;
- Costs of services provided to young adults through an approved plan for housing, transportation, and employment; reconciliation of these expenses and any additional related costs with the funds allocated for these services; and
- An explanation of and a plan to resolve any shortages or surpluses in order to end the fiscal year with a balanced budget.
- These plans are being reviewed at the state office to address any areas of concern regarding fiscal management of independent living services. The plans serve as a continual tool to help project budget issues and to identify trends and/or concerns specific to budget management for service delivery to young adults formerly in foster care.

The Department has a Community-Based Care (CBC) Fiscal Oversight Unit that reports to the Chief Financial Officer. This unit focuses on oversight of the fiscal components of the outsourced child welfare system. Fiscal Oversight staff have conducted site visits to community-based care lead agencies, developed tools for monitoring, and provided technical assistance to community-based care lead agencies and the Department’s contract managers. This fiscal monitoring model has been successful in identifying areas of concern before any major findings occur. It has also been well received by the community-based care lead agencies.

For calendar year 2011, the CBC Fiscal Oversight Unit provided Department of Children and Families Fiscal Monitoring and Technical Assistance of Community-Based Care Child Welfare Lead Agency and Department of Children and Families Financial Risk Assessments for the following community-based care lead agencies:

Table 3: 2011 Department of Children and Families Fiscal Monitoring and Technical Assistance of Community-Based Care Child Welfare Lead Agency and Department of Children and Families Financial Risk Assessments		
Circuit	CBC	Dates
2	Big Bend Community Based Care	February 2-3, 2011
10	Heartland for Children	February 15-16, 2011
5	Kid Central Incorporated	February 17-18, 2011
15	Child and Family Connections	April 19-20, 2011
19	United for Families	April 21-22, 2011
18	Community Cased Care of Brevard	May 16-17, 2011
20	Children Network of Southwest Florida	June 7-8, 2011
13	Hillsborough Kids Incorporated	June 9-10, 2011
9	CBC of Central Florida	October 3-5, 2011

All community-based care lead agencies that received fiscal monitoring, technical assistance and financial risk assessments over the course of the 2011 calendar year were found to be in compliance with their approved Independent Living cost allocation plan for reporting Chafee Administration costs.

V. Rules Promulgation

Provisions relating to the delivery of independent living transitional services are included in multiple chapters, including:

- Chapter 65C-28, Out-of-Home Care, providing direction for delivery of services to youth in foster care. Specifically, 65C-28.009, Adolescent Services, implements s. 409.1451(3), F.S.
- Chapter 65C-30, General Child Welfare Provisions, providing direction on delivery of services to youth under supervision of the Department.
- Chapter 65C-31, Services to Young Adults Formerly in the Custody of the Department, providing direction on the delivery of services to young adults, specifically those provided by s. 409.1451(5), F.S.

No rules related to Independent Living were promulgated by the Florida Department of Children and Families 2011.

VI. Summary

In 2011, the Department was found to be compliant with the National Youth in Transition data requirements and met all current established federal requirements in this area. There is clearly more work to be done with this population of youth to ensure a successful transition from foster care. The Department will continue to work with stakeholders across the state to promote evidence based practices for youth in our child welfare system. Specific initiatives and practices such as “Everybody’s A Teacher”, Youth SHINE, Youth Leadership Academy, trauma informed care, and family centered practice are in various stages of implementation. The initiatives outlined below are currently underway will have a positive impact on these youth.

- The Crossover Youth Practice Model is being implemented in several circuits. This practice model is consistent with trauma informed care and family centered practice models already being implemented in many circuits.
- The Department’s goal is for each circuit to implement a medical home model within its system of care. Multiple circuits have already implemented and the remaining circuits are in multiple phases of planning with implementation in early 2012.
- Multiple projects with community-based care agencies are underway to improve performance in achieving permanency. These include Casey Program Permanency Round Tables and Permanency Values Training from the National Resource Center on Permanency and Family Connections. An innovative project videoing teens discussing permanency issues is in its beginning stages in Florida. More information is available at: <http://www.rglewis.com/>