

CF OPERATING PROCEDURE
NO. 170-17

STATE OF FLORIDA
DEPARTMENT OF
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
TALLAHASSEE, July 29, 2019

Child Welfare

SERVICES FOR TRANSITIONING YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

This operating procedure provides guidance and minimum procedure requirements for assisting transitioning youth and young adults to successful adulthood. The guidance includes best practice for specific service delivery and documentation of independent living services.

This operating procedure is applicable to all Department of Children and Families (Department) child welfare staff, Community-Based Care (CBC) Lead Agencies, child welfare subcontracted case management organizations, and sheriff offices that conduct child protective investigations.

BY DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY:

(Signed original copy on file)

PATRICIA MEDLOCK
Assistant Secretary for
Child Welfare

SUMMARY OF REVISED, DELETED, OR ADDED MATERIALS

Added Chapter 1, Life Skills and Independent Living Needs Assessments.

This operating procedure supersedes CFOP 170-17 dated February 22, 2019.

OPR: Office of Child Welfare

DISTRIBUTION: X: OSGC; ASGO; Region/Circuit Child Welfare staff.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Paragraph

Chapter 1 – LIFE SKILLS AND INDEPENDENT LIVING NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

Purpose..... 1-1
 Definitions 1-2
 Roles and Responsibilities 1-3
 Life Skill Types 1-4
 Assessing Life Skills..... 1-5
 Life Skill Plans..... 1-6
 FSFN Documentation..... 1-7

Chapter 2 – TRANSITION PLANNING FOR YOUTH

Purpose..... 2-1
 Definitions 2-2
 Roles and Responsibilities 2-3
 Pre-Planning, Assessment, and Review 2-4
 Records and Resources Exchanged 2-5
 Developing and Updating the Transition Plan..... 2-6
 Transition Plan Meetings..... 2-7
 FSFN Documentation..... 2-8

Chapter 3 – EXTENDED FOSTER CARE

Purpose..... 3-1
 Definitions 3-2
 Transitioning Youth to EFC 3-3
 Young Adults Readmission into Foster Care 3-4
 Evaluating and Supervising Living Arrangements..... 3-5
 Ongoing Assessment of a Qualifying Activity..... 3-6
 Discharge and Denial Review..... 3-7
 FSFN Documentation..... 3-8

Chapter 4 – POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION SERVICES AND SUPPORT (Draft Pending)

Chapter 5 – AFTERCARE SERVICES (Draft Pending)

Chapter 6 – NATIONAL YOUTH IN TRANSITION DATABASE (Draft Pending)

Chapter 7 – EXTENDED FEDERALLY FUNDED FOSTER CARE (obsoleted by Chapter [65C-41](#),
 Florida Administrative Code)

Chapter 1

LIFE SKILLS AND INDEPENDENT LIVING NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

1-1. Purpose. This chapter describes policies and procedures for Rule [65C-28.009](#), Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), pertaining to youth and young adults' life skill attainment and independent living needs assessments.

1-2. Definitions.

a. "Exceptional Student Education (ESE)." Instruction for students ages 3 – 21 years of age who have disabilities or are determined gifted.

b. "Independent Living Needs Assessment." A systematic procedure to identify a youth's basic skills, emotional and social capabilities, strengths, and needs to match the youth with appropriate independent living services. The assessment addresses knowledge of basic living skills, job readiness, money management abilities, decision-making skills, goal setting, task completion, and other transitional living needs.

c. "Independent Living Skills Plan." An individualized plan that reflects the strategy for building a young person's life skill competency, particularly in areas of assessed need.

d. "Informal Needs Assessment." Evaluating independent living skills during typical interactions or through observation such as routine home visits.

e. "Life Skills Progress Documentation Log (form CF-FSP 5444, available in DCF Forms)." A codified form used by Child Welfare Professionals and Caregivers to record the youth or young adult's life skill activities.

f. "National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD)." A national mandatory data collection system that collects information from states to track transition services to measure outcome data that may be used to evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery.

1-3. Roles and Responsibilities.

a. Caregivers are required to take the lead role in ensuring children and young adults in their home are provided the skills necessary to transition to adulthood and report on the progress of skills development. These skills include daily living activities and other essential independent living skills for enhanced wellbeing and self-sufficiency.

b. Child welfare professionals shall support, train, and assist caregivers with their responsibilities. When no caregiver exists, or the caregiver lacks the ability and resources, the child welfare professional must ensure children and young adults receive the necessary skills.

c. Child welfare professionals are also required to assess life skill progress and incorporate assessment outcomes into relevant case management planning and reporting functions, including, but not limited to, case planning tasks and judicial review social study reports.

1-4. Life Skill Types.

a. Children and young adults in out-of-home care acquire independent living skills that have been paid for or provided by the Department and its contracted service providers using John H. Chaffee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood (Chafee program) funds. Each of the skills will fall into one or more of the following NYTD categories:

(1) Academic Support. Services designed to help a youth complete high school or obtain a General Equivalency Degree (GED). Such services include the following: academic counseling; preparation for a GED, including assistance for or studying for GED exam; tutoring; help with homework; study skills training; literacy training; and help accessing educational resources. Academic support does NOT include a youth's general attendance in school.

(2) Post-Secondary Educational Support. Services designed to help a youth enter or complete a post-secondary education and include the following: classes for test preparation, such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT); counseling about college; information about financial aid and scholarships; help completing college or loan applications; or tutoring while in college.

(3) Career Preparation. Services that focus on developing a youth's ability to find, apply for, and retain appropriate employment. Career preparation includes the following types of instruction and support services: vocational and career assessment, including career exploration and planning, guidance in setting and assessing vocational and career interests and skills, and help in matching interests and abilities with vocational goals; job seeking and job placement support, including identifying potential employers, writing resumes, completing job applications, developing interview skills, job shadowing, receiving job referrals, using career resource libraries, understanding employee benefits coverage, and securing work permits; retention support, including job coaching; learning how to work with employers and other employees; understanding workplace values such as timeliness and appearance; and understanding authority and customer relationships.

(4) Employment Programs or Vocational Training. Services designed to build a youth's skills for a specific trade, vocation, or career through classes or on-site training. Employment programs include a youth's participation in an apprenticeship, internship, or summer employment program and do not include summer or after-school jobs secured by the youth alone. Vocational training includes a youth's participation in vocational or trade programs and the receipt of training in occupational classes for such skills as cosmetology, auto mechanics, building trades, nursing, computer science, and other current or emerging employment sectors.

(5) Budget and Financial Management. Training or practice with: living within a budget; opening and using a checking and savings account; balancing a checkbook; developing consumer awareness and smart shopping skills; accessing information about credit, loans and taxes; and filling out tax forms. This also includes working with the youth or young adult on accessing the Department of Financial Services' financial literacy curriculum available at financeyourfuture.myfloridacfo.com.

(6) Housing Education and Home Management Training. Assistance or training in locating and maintaining housing, including filling out a rental application and acquiring a lease, handling security deposits and utilities, understanding practices for keeping a healthy and safe home, understanding tenant's rights and responsibilities, and handling landlord complaints. Home management includes instruction in food preparation, laundry, housekeeping, living cooperatively, meal planning, grocery shopping, and basic maintenance and repairs.

(7) Health Education and Risk Prevention. Includes providing information about: hygiene, nutrition, fitness and exercise and first aid; medical and dental care benefits, health care resources and insurance, prenatal care and maintaining personal medical records; sex education, abstinence education, and HIV prevention, including education and information about sexual

development and sexuality, pregnancy prevention and family planning, and sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS; and substance abuse prevention and intervention, including education and information about the effects and consequences of substance use (alcohol, drugs, tobacco) and substance avoidance and intervention. Health education and risk prevention does not include the youth's actual receipt of direct medical care or substance abuse treatment.

(8) Family Support and Healthy Marriage Education. Includes education and information about safe and stable families, healthy marriages, spousal communication, parenting, responsible fatherhood, childcare skills, teen parenting, and domestic and family violence prevention.

(9) Mentoring. Mentoring means that the youth has been matched with a screened and trained adult for a one-on-one relationship that involves the two meeting on a regular basis. Mentoring can be short-term, but it may also support the development of a long-term relationship. While youth often are connected to adult role models through school, work, or family, this service category only includes a mentor relationship that has been facilitated, paid for, or provided by the state agency or its staff.

(10) Supervised Independent Living. Supervised independent living means that the young adult is residing in out-of-home care, living independently under a supervised living arrangement, pursuant to subsection [39.6251\(4\)](#), F.S. While this independent living skill may demonstrate a multitude of other life skills, designating this skill type means that the young adult continues to reside in an environment that allows the young adult the appropriately assessed independence essential for transition to adulthood.

b. The NYTD categories detailed above are aligned with Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN), Independent Living Case Notes for required documentation and federal data reporting.

c. Children and young adults in out-of-home care also acquire other independent living, practical, and general life skills in their home environment. In conjunction with NYTD categories referenced above, the following life skill areas shall be formally addressed as a strength or a need upon completion of an Independent Living Needs Assessment documented in FSFN by a child welfare professional:

- (1) Career Planning;
- (2) Daily Living;
- (3) Education Planning;
- (4) Emergency and Safety Skills;
- (5) Food Management;
- (6) Health;
- (7) Housekeeping;
- (8) Housing;
- (9) Interpersonal Skills;
- (10) Job Maintenance Skills;
- (11) Job Seeking Skills;

- (12) Knowledge of Community Resources;
- (13) Legal Skills;
- (14) Leisure Activities;
- (15) Money Management;
- (16) Personal Appearance;
- (17) Religion;
- (18) Self-Care;
- (19) Social Relationships;
- (20) Transportation; and,
- (21) Work Life.

d. All skill topics addressed with youth and young adults for the purpose of building capacity toward adulthood may fall into one or more of the life skill areas and categories previously noted.

1-5. Assessing Life Skills. Child welfare professionals shall assess a youth and young adult's ongoing progress and competency in acquiring essential life skills.

a. An Informal Needs Assessment shall be completed monthly at a minimum using a Life Skills Progress Documentation Log (form CF-FSP 5444, available in DCF Forms) for youth and young adults 13 years of age or older.

b. The Life Skills Progress Documentation Log shall be completed by caregivers and child welfare professionals attesting to or assisting the young person in acquiring life skills.

c. All youth and young adults age 16 years or older shall be encouraged to participate in an Independent Living Needs Assessment. The assessment shall gauge a young person's knowledge and/or ability of the skills referenced in paragraph 1-4c of this operating procedure.

(1) The Casey Life Skills Assessment and the Daniel Memorial Independent Living Skills Assessment are examples of recommended tools that may be used to measure life skill competency; however, the assessment may also be the process in which a child welfare professional utilizes the youth or young adult's case records to conduct a thorough review and determine strengths and needs.

(2) The assessment shall be discussed collaboratively with the youth, caregiver, guardian, and anyone else that the youth selects to be a supportive adult on their transition to adulthood.

(3) If the youth or young adult has an impairment due to a physical, intellectual, emotional, or psychiatric condition that substantially limits his or her ability to participate, the child welfare professional shall work with the young person's caregiver, supportive adults, service providers, and school district personnel as applicable to complete the assessment.

(4) The assessment shall also yield information that assists in outlining specific, measurable goals that will help guide in the development of an Independent Living Skills Plan.

d. The outcome of all assessments shall be documented in FSFN.

1-6. Life Skill Plans.

a. All youth and young adults age 16 years and older must have an Independent Living Skills Plan that details the following:

(1) Goals for acquiring the skills that were assessed as deficient in the assessment process;

(2) Activities, steps, or demonstrated behaviors for achieving the goals; and,

(3) Resources to assist in completing the activities.

b. The child welfare professional must work collaboratively with the youth or young adult on the completion of the plan as well as with other supportive adults that the young person selects to participate.

c. If a youth or young adult is enrolled in an ESE program, plans shall be coordinated with the educational institution or relevant school district.

1-7. FSFN Documentation.

a. Informal Life Skills Assessments must be documented in the following ways:

(1) Complete an Independent Living Case Note and check all relevant NYTD categories as referenced in the Life Skills Progress Documentation Log (form CF-FSP 5444, available in DCF Forms) aligned with paragraph 1-4a of this operating procedure.

(2) Upload the completed Life Skills Progress Documentation Log in the Independent Living Filing Cabinet under the Image Category called Assessments.

b. Independent Living Needs Assessments must be documented the following ways:

(1) Complete an Independent Living Case Note and check the Independent Living (IL) Assessment category.

(2) Input strengths and needs in the relevant Life Skills fields of the Life Skill Assessment Pop-up page under the Academic and Life Skills Progress Tab of the Independent Living Module.

Chapter 2

TRANSITION PLANNING FOR YOUTH

2-1. Purpose.

a. The development of life skills and preparation for that transition to adulthood begins at age 13 years of age; however, this chapter outlines policies for transition planning specific to the requirements referenced in s. [39.6035](#), Florida Statutes (F.S.), and preparing for judicial review hearings for children 17 years of age as referenced in s. [39.701](#), F.S.

b. This chapter describes policies relevant to effective transition planning for older youth under the protective supervision of the Department, providing specific guidance as to the roles and responsibilities of child welfare professionals and caregivers, and timeframes as to when a transition plan must be developed and finalized. The chapter also details the information that needs to be addressed in the plan and the relevant records or resources that must be exchanged in preparation for the youth's transition to adulthood.

2-2. Definitions.

a. "Transition Plan." The required written plan developed by the youth or young adult that contains the goals, choices, and decisions for obtaining or maintaining the services necessary to successfully transition to adulthood. The plan provides details on the transition services outlined in the case plan, and identifies and explains roles of the supportive adult or designated staff assisting in services.

b. "My Pathway to Success Plan." A universal form (CF-FSP [5425](#), available in DCF Forms) that the youth or young adult utilizes to detail the goals, choices, and decisions for obtaining or maintaining the services necessary to successfully transition to adulthood. Once completed, the document becomes that youth's individual Transition Plan.

c. "Independent Living Specialist." A child welfare professional that exhibits a level of subject matter expertise in the delivery of independent living services and fully comprehends program eligibility for Extended Foster Care (EFC), Postsecondary Education Services and Support (PESS), and Aftercare Services.

d. "Transitioning Youth." Children 16-17 years of age, that have not yet reached their 18th birthday, under the Department's protective supervision.

e. "Transition Facilitator." A designated child welfare professional that establishes a positive relationship with the Transitioning Youth, proficient in both case management and independent living services, that takes the lead in coordinating the development of the transition plan and ensures that the requirements in ss. 39.6035 and [39.701\(3\)](#), F.S., are satisfied for each youth.

f. "Records and Resources Exchanged." A universal form (CF-FSP [5426](#), available in DCF Forms) used to document the required information that must be provided to the youth during the youth's period of transition.

g. "Transition Planning Meeting." A time when the Transitioning Youth, Transition Facilitator, and other chosen Supportive Adult(s) meet to develop, review and/or finalize the Transition Plan.

h. "Supportive Adult." A positive, potentially permanently connected adult that is willing and able to assist the Transitioning Youth with the youth's Transition Plan and provide encouragement in the youth's transition to adulthood.

2-3. Roles and Responsibilities.

a. Caregivers are required to take the lead in a number of activities demonstrating quality parenting such as assisting youth in mastering age appropriate life skills. It is the responsibility of child welfare professionals to work collaboratively, supporting the caregiver and Transitioning Youth as he or she makes the transition to adulthood.

b. The Independent Living Specialist assesses and manages the life skills and independent living service delivery to older foster youth and eligible young adults. This designated child welfare professional must team with the Transition Facilitator, assisting in acquiring and sharing critical case information that may impact the youth's transition.

c. The Transition Facilitator takes the lead role in ensuring that each Transitioning Youth has an opportunity to develop a comprehensive plan and receives the required records and resources necessary to help him or her become self-sufficient.

d. The Independent Living Specialist and Transition Facilitator may be the same child welfare professional as the roles are not mutually exclusive.

e. The Transitioning Youth shall develop an individualized Transition Plan utilizing the My Pathways to Success Plan (form CF-FSP [5425](#), available in DCF Forms) and establish a list of Supportive Adults that may contribute to the planning and development process. These actions shall be in collaboration with the Transition Facilitator.

(1) If the Transitioning Youth has an impairment due to a physical, intellectual, emotional, or psychiatric condition that substantially limits his or her ability to develop the plan, the Transition Facilitator shall aid in developing the plan with the Transitioning Youth and the youth's caregiver, as well as other Supportive Adults such as potential guardians, individuals from the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD), and School District personnel.

(2) The Transition Facilitator must also assist in ensuring that diligent efforts are made by relevant child welfare professionals to obtain a plenary guardian or legal guardianship for Transitioning Youth who are receiving services from APD, are on the APD waiting list, or any youth as specified in s. [39.701\(3\)\(b\)1](#), F.S. A guardian must be identified to assist with informed decisions made on the youth's behalf when the youth reaches 18 years of age.

(3) In the event the Transitioning Youth is unable to write the Transition Plan, the Transition Facilitator shall assist in writing the plan using the responses provided by the youth or the youth's guardian and coordinate with case management staff to determine revisions to the case plan.

2-4. Pre-Planning, Assessment, and Review.

a. In order to assist the youth in transition, the Transition Facilitator shall establish a positive relationship with the Transitioning Youth. Building a connection is an important step in establishing trust and respect which will in turn yield a more productive Transition Plan.

(1) To establish or maintain a positive connection with the youth, a Transition Facilitator shall participate in both formal and informal meetings with the youth by attending some home visits, court hearings, permanency staffings, appointments, and school and community events. These meetings will not only keep the Transition Facilitator well-informed about important case related information but will also assist in rapport building.

(2) If the youth is residing out of the assigned direct service area and the primary Transition Facilitator is unable to establish the face to face contact necessary to maintain a positive relationship, a courtesy Transition Facilitator must take the lead.

(3) At every opportunity the Transition Facilitator shall engage the youth in conversation about topics that will elicit ideas for successfully reaching life goals. Getting the youth to begin critically thinking about his or her future is a key element in pre-planning.

(4) Conversation between the Transition Facilitator and Transitioning Youth shall cover elements that will be captured in the Transition Plan and Records and Resources Exchanged form. There must also be dialogue to identify individuals whom the youth would like to attend the Transition Planning Meeting(s) and/or assist the youth in the development of the Transition Plan.

b. In addition to establishing or maintaining a relationship, the Transition Facilitator shall conduct an informal assessment of the youth's wellbeing, utilizing all records available, and determine strengths and needs pertinent to the development of the Transition Plan. Any needs must be addressed during the Transition Planning Meeting(s) and discussed separately with relevant child welfare professionals. A thorough evaluation of the youth's wellbeing will include a review of documents to include, but not be limited to:

(1) Child Functioning as detailed in the ongoing Family Functioning Assessment.

(2) Department of Juvenile Justice Records.

(a) Face Sheet.

(b) Risk Assessment.

(3) Behavioral Health Records.

(a) Comprehensive Behavioral Health Assessment.

(b) Psychological and Psychiatric Evaluations.

(c) Treatment Plans.

(4) Physical Health Records.

(5) Education Records.

(a) Individualized Education Plan.

(b) 504 Plan.

(6) Life Skills Assessment(s)

2-5 Records and Resources Exchanged. The item identified in paragraphs 2-5b and c below are included on form CF-FSP [5426](#) (available in DCF Forms). The list is not meant to be exhaustive. The form includes space for the Transition Plan Facilitator and Independent Living Specialist to add additional items that need to be included to promote wellbeing during the transition to adulthood.

a. Providing youth with essential records and resources during their period of transition shall begin as age appropriate for each applicable item. For example, having a discussion with and providing information to youth at 14 years of age regarding the credit check requirements and the results of those reports would be age appropriate. Another example is obtaining or having a discussion

regarding the court order that removes the youth's disability of nonage that may occur as early as 16 years of age because the youth desires to open his or her own individual bank account or obtain his or her own car insurance.

b. A list of required documents and information to be provided to the Transitioning Youth includes, but is not be limited to:

- (1) Birth Certificate.
- (2) Social Security Card.
- (3) Florida Identification Card.
- (4) Driver's/Learner's License.
- (5) Medicaid Card.
- (6) Bank Account.
- (7) Master Trust Account (if applicable).
- (8) Medical/Dental.
- (9) Behavioral Health.
- (10) Education.
- (11) Disability of nonage court order.
- (12) Letter providing dates that the child is under jurisdiction of the court.
- (13) Process for accessing case file.
- (14) Provide Financial Literacy Curriculum by Department of Financial Services (DFS).
- (15) Independent Living Programs.
- (16) Health Care Surrogate Designation of Power of Attorney.
- (17) ACCESS Florida Public Assistance Programs.

c. A list of recommended documents and information to provide the Transitioning Youth (if applicable) includes, but is not be limited to:

- (1) Photographs.
- (2) Immigration.
- (3) Voter Registration.
- (4) Credit Check.
- (5) Juvenile Justice.
- (6) Life Skills Assessment(s).

- (7) Pregnant and Parenting.
- (8) Budget.
- (9) Criminal Record Expunction.
- (10) Tuition and Fee Exemption.
- (11) Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
- (12) Scholarships.
- (13) Keys to Independence Program.
- (14) Social Security Administration.
- (15) Career Source Florida.
- (16) Supportive Adult Contacts.
- (17) Disability.

d. The Records and Resources Exchanged form must be signed by the Transition Facilitator attesting to meeting the requirements pursuant to s. [39.701\(3\)](#), F.S., and filed with the court to align with the special 17-year-old judicial review hearing which occurs within 90 days of the youth's 17th birthday.

2-6. Developing and Updating the Transition Plan.

a. Transition Plans must be constructed utilizing the My Pathway to Success Plan (form CF-FSP [5425](#), available in DCF Forms). The form is designed to encourage the youth to critically think about the youth's future and make realistic goals prior to writing down a plan for each specific subject area.

b. The Transition Plan shall be as detailed as the youth chooses and be conducted in the youth's primary language as specified in s. [39.6035](#), F.S.

c. The My Pathway to Success Plan form lists the following subjects:

(1) Short Term Goals. This subject addresses the youth's planned accomplishments in the near future such as graduating high school, getting a part time job, and obtaining a driver license. The plan may also include intangible goals such as develop better study habits or be more cooperative with the trusted adults helping with the Transition Plan. The youth shall also reference the supportive adults, along with the programs that will assist in the process. The programs may include EFC, PESS, and Aftercare Services, if applicable.

(2) Long Term Goals. This subject lists goals specific to something that youth wants to do further into the future such as graduating college, becoming a physical therapist, moving to Australia, and buying a car. The youth may also want to write down intangible goals such as improving a relationship with family members or becoming financially self-sufficient. The youth will also reference the supportive adults, along with the programs that will assist in the process.

(3) Housing. This subject specifies where the youth wants to live after turning 18 years old and what preparations need to be made, taking into consideration the current living situation and

permanency goal. For youth who are likely to age out of care in EFC, an appropriate living arrangement option must also be listed.

(4) Health Insurance. This subject addresses health insurance coverage, giving consideration to the youth's current Medicaid Managed Care plan. The plan may include consulting with a child welfare professional to discuss possible options, benefits, and requirements for continued enrollment after the youth reaches 18 years of age.

(5) Education. This subject covers the strategy for achieving the youth's educational goals. A step by step approach to reaching the goal may be for the youth to write down the career or job title desired and then write what degree or certification is required, along with the schools that may have reputable programs and services for supporting former foster youth. The youth shall also give consideration on tuition and other costs associated with their goal.

(6) Financial Literacy. This subject details the steps necessary to acquire the skills and knowledge that enables the youth to understand and make good decisions about money. Consideration shall be given to the existing tools and publications that promote financial education such as the programs provided by Florida Department of Financial Services.

(7) Driver's License. This subject details the plan for obtaining licensure and the steps required such as taking the Drug and Alcohol Safety Course. This may include the Keys to Independence Program or other applicable resources available to assist in reaching the goal. Consideration must be given to the age and development of the youth.

(8) Workforce Support and Employment Services. This subject includes the detail needed to accomplish goals relevant to a career. However, the information may or may not sync with specific education goals as the youth may choose to list out tasks necessary to acquire a part time job while completing secondary education or attending a postsecondary institution. The first activity may be to visit a local or online resource for guidance on completing a resume or filling out a job application.

d. The development of the Transition Plan must begin when the youth turns 16 years of age.

(1) A draft of the initial written Transition Plan must be completed no later than 16½ years of age to allow child welfare professionals and caregiver(s) adequate time to work with the youth in meeting the goals in the youth's plan and address any skills deficiencies.

(2) The initial Transition Plan must be filed with the court to align with the special 17-year-old judicial review hearing occurring within the 90 days of the youth's 17th birthday pursuant to s. [39.701\(3\)](#), F.S.

e. If the Department begins protective supervision any time after the youth's 16th birthday, the Transition Plan must be initiated within 30 days. The Transition Plan must be completed within 90 days after the start of the Department's protective supervision or prior to the first judicial review, whichever comes first. If protective supervision begins within the 90-day period prior to the youth's 18th birthday, transition planning must begin immediately to include the completion of the written plan.

f. The Transition Facilitator must encourage and guide the Transitioning Youth to update sections of the My Pathway to Success Plan as often as necessary to ensure that the Transition Plan reflects the most relevant goals and circumstances to meet the needs in the youth's life.

g. Regardless of how often the My Pathway to Success Plan has been revised, an updated Transition Plan must be documented during the 90-day period immediately prior to the date on which the youth will attain 18 years of age.

h. If the Transitioning Youth is eligible and plans to remain in EFC after turning 18 years old the Transition Facilitator must ensure that the Transition Plan includes an agreement detailing the chosen qualifying activity and supervised living arrangement as referenced in Rule [65C-41.004](#), Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.).

i. The finalized My Pathway to Success Plan will serve as the last written Transition Plan unless the youth transitions to EFC.

2-7 Transition Plan Meetings.

a. The Transition Facilitator is responsible for scheduling the meeting and must consult with the youth, scheduling a date, time, and place to begin formally drafting the initial Transition Plan.

(1) A list of Supportive Adults must be developed and those adults invited to attend the meeting as approved by the Transitioning Youth and Transition Facilitator.

(2) In the instance that a Transitioning Youth provides the Transition Facilitator a completed My Pathway to Success Plan at the time of the initial meeting, the meeting shall focus on going over the youth responses and assisting the youth in enhancing areas that may need further detail.

b. The Transition Facilitator may schedule additional meetings as needed to ensure the Transition Plan is updated and reflects the most relevant goals and circumstances to meet the needs of the youth.

2-8. FSFN Documentation.

a. Initial Transition Plan Meetings must be documented in the FSFN Meetings Module using the meeting type of "Transition Planning – Initial."

b. Follow up meetings and/or updates to the Transition Plan must be documented in the FSFN Meetings Module using the meeting type of "Transition Planning – Ongoing."

c. All Transition Plans finalized during the 90-day period immediately prior to the date on which the youth will attain 18 years of age must be documented in the FSFN Meetings Module using the meeting type of "Transition Planning – Closure."

d. Both the My Pathway to Success Plan (form CF-FSP [5425](#)) and the Records and Resources Exchanged (form CF-FSP [5426](#)) must be scanned into FSFN and attached to the Meeting page using the appropriate meeting type.

Chapter 3

EXTENDED FOSTER CARE

3-1. Purpose. This chapter outlines policies for s. [39.6251](#), Florida Statutes (F.S.), pertaining to continuing care for young adults and Chapter [65C-41](#), Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), titled Extension of Foster Care.

3-2. Definitions.

a. "Adverse action" means any action by the Department, community-based care lead agency, or its contracted service provider that denies a young adult's application for readmission to extended foster care, or that discharges a young adult from extended foster care.

b. "Designated staff" means a case manager or other child welfare professional designated by the community-based care lead agency or its contracted service provider assigned to work with youth and young adults in transition to handle all matters pursuant to Extended Foster Care.

c. "Extended Foster Care" means the program available pursuant to s. 39.6251, F.S.

d. "Extended Foster Care Agreement" means a document that contains the informed consent of the youth or their legal guardian(s) to participate in the program.

e. "Extended Foster Care Voluntary Placement Agreement" means a document that contains the young adult's or their legal guardians informed consent to participate in the program, the application, and authorization for the Department to have placement and care responsibility.

f. "Fair hearing" means a hearing that is conducted pursuant to the procedural requirements of Rules 65-2.042 through 65-2.069, F.A.C.

g. "Shared Living Plan" means a document that contains detailed information about the living arrangement between applicable parties.

h. "Supervised Living Arrangement" means that the young adult is living independently under a supervised arrangement, approved by the community-based care lead agency, pursuant to subsection 39.6251(4), F.S.

i. "Supervised Living Arrangement Assessment" means a document that contains an evaluation of the young adult's living environment.

3-3. Transitioning Youth to EFC.

a. Youth in the legal custody of the Department that are identified during the 90-day period immediately prior to the date on which the youth will attain 18 years of age must be provided an Extended Foster Care (EFC) Agreement. EFC program eligibility and participation expectations shall be discussed at that time.

(1) If the transitioning youth chooses to remain in foster care, the EFC Agreement shall be signed as an acknowledgement of the eligibility requirements and their plan to participate in the program.

(2) If the youth chooses not to remain in foster care for any reason, the youth must be provided the My Decision to Leave Extended Foster Care (Opt Out) (form CF-FSP [5375](#), available in

DCF Forms). The form must be attached to the transition plan that is filed with the court and uploaded into FSFN.

(3) If the youth refuses to sign the EFC Agreement, designated staff shall document the refusal by writing “refused to sign” on the form itself.

(4) If the youth is unable to sign the EFC Agreement, designated staff shall document the inability by writing “unable to sign” on the form itself.

(a) Designated staff must make diligent efforts to obtain signature and/or consent for entering into the EFC.

(b) Acceptable circumstances of documenting “unable to sign” include, but may not be limited to: the youth is missing or on runaway

(c) Guardians may sign on the youth’s behalf if the youth is determined to be unable to sign.

(5) Failure to sign the EFC Agreement by the transitioning youth does not prevent continued program eligibility nor the ability for the court to retain jurisdiction.

(6) The EFC Agreement shall be uploaded in the Independent Living File Cabinet in FSFN using the appropriate EFC Agreement image type.

b. After designated staff determines that a youth will be continuing in extended foster care, approved living arrangement options must be identified. Identification of proposed living arrangements should have occurred during the development and finalization of the youth’s transition plan when discussing housing as pursuant to CFOP 170-17, [Chapter 2](#).

3-4. Young Adults’ Readmission into Foster Care. Young adults applying for readmission to foster care must complete an Extended Foster Care Voluntary Placement Agreement (EFC VPA).

a. Designated staff shall assist the young adult with completing the agreement.

(1) If while assisting it is determined that the potentially eligible young adult is not in a qualifying activity and/or not residing in an approved living arrangement, designated staff shall assess whether the young adult is eligible for continued assistance through either Postsecondary Education Services and Support (PESS) or Aftercare Services.

(2) Aftercare Services may be used to bridge the young adult into EFC.

b. If the young adult is unable to complete the EFC VPA due to a disability, designated staff shall work with the young adult’s guardian in determining program eligibility and obtaining consent to participate.

c. Designated staff must make diligent efforts to obtain signature and consent for entering into the EFC VPA.

d. The EFC VPA shall be uploaded in the Independent Living File Cabinet in FSFN using the appropriate EFC Voluntary Placement Agreement image type.

3-5. Evaluating and Supervising Living Arrangements.

a. Designated staff shall complete the Supervised Living Arrangement Assessment (SLAA) prior to approving the living arrangement. The completed assessment is documentation of the

justification as to whether or not the placement is appropriate. Designated staff shall consider the youth/young adult's child welfare background in making an assessment. The following elements are identified in the SLAA and must be evaluated in the form:

(1) Supervised Living Arrangement Type.

(a) Prior to completing the assessment, designated staff shall collaborate with the youth/young adult on potentially available placement options. Collaboration must begin for youth pursuant to Chapter 2 of this operating procedure.

(b) An inspection of the placement type shall be completed to determine if the arrangement is viable. Selected placement options on the form include:

1. Licensed Foster Home;
2. Licensed Group Home;
3. Transitional Living Program;
4. Assisted Living Facility;
5. Shared Housing;
6. Shared Housing-Host Home; and,
7. Individual Housing.

(2) Readiness.

(a) If the placement is a Shared Housing type, designated staff may conduct a criminal background search of any household member(s) based upon the youth/young adult's assessed safety and well-being needs. Consideration must be given to both the privacy of the youth/young adult and the household member(s).

(b) If there are concerns for the youth/young adult's safety, including risk associated while residing with other household members, those issues may be addressed by developing a safety protocol in the section described below on Supervision and/or in the Shared Living Plan, if the living arrangement is approved.

(3) Supervision. Document how the youth/young adult will be supported by the living arrangement to ensure the home environment is safe and doesn't jeopardize the youth/young adult's well-being.

(4) Services and Supports. Describe the transitional services that will be provided to assist the youth/young adult achieve their goals and reach independent living.

(5) Assessment Decision.

b. Multiple evaluations on various living arrangement types may be completed before determining the most appropriate arrangement.

(1) Although the CBC has approval authority, the youth/young adult must ultimately agree to the living arrangement.

(2) If the designated staff and youth/young adult cannot agree on a living arrangement, designated staff shall make attempts to resolve any conflict under the guidance of the CBC approving agency prior to denying or terminating the young adult's program eligibility.

c. The SLAA shall be uploaded in the Independent Living File Cabinet FSFN, using the appropriate Supervised Independent Living Assessment image type.

d. Designated staff shall complete a Shared Living Plan (SLP) once a living arrangement has been approved. The intent is to outline the activities necessary to support the living arrangement and the persons or agencies involved in assisting with the plan. Designated staff are expected to have general knowledge of the skills that the youth/young adult possesses or lacks impacting a successful transition in the approved living arrangement. The following must be addressed in the SLP form:

(1) Household Chores and Daily Living Activities. List areas the youth/young adult will be required to complete and those that will require assistance. If it is determined no assistance is needed, the determination should be well supported in case notes and the life skills assessments.

(2) Physical and Behavioral Health. List areas in which the youth/young adult will require assistance with activities pertaining to overall health and wellbeing. If it is determined no assistance is needed, the determination should be well supported in case notes and the life skills assessments.

(3) Check-In/Curfew and 24-hour Crisis Intervention and Support. Develop a plan to address any household customs and the maintenance of a safe, stable home environment. This includes a determination on the length of acceptable absences from the home.

(4) Financial Resources. This section must address room and board, rent, utilities, allowance, and any other expenses associated with the supervised living arrangement. If no allowance is provided directly to the youth/young adult, additional justification is needed.

e. The SLP shall be uploaded in the Independent Living File Cabinet in FSFN, using the appropriate Shared Living Agreement image type.

f. If the young adult does not appear to be residing in the approved living arrangement, designated staff shall meet with the young adult to assess the young adult's safety and well-being and, if needed, identify another living arrangement.

(1) If the young adult does not return to the approved living arrangement after 30 days and/or another living arrangement has not been approved, designated staff must proceed with discharging the young adult from EFC pursuant to Rule [65C-41.005](#), F.A.C.

(2) In the event of a young adult's planned or unplanned arrest or detention due to an involuntary commitment, for any reason, designated staff must assess the length of time that young adult will be detained. If a young adult is or will be detained for a period longer than 30 days, the young adult is no longer considered living in the approved supervised living arrangement and designated staff shall proceed with providing the young adult notice of adverse action.

g. Designated staff shall make face-to-face contact with young adults no less frequently than every 30 days in the young adult's approved living arrangement. This contact may be planned or unplanned. During the contacts, designated staff shall observe the home environment and, at minimum, discuss the transition plan and shared living plan.

h. Youth and young adults that reside outside of their county of jurisdiction shall adhere to the same requirements as outlined in Rule [65C-30.018](#), F.A.C., and s. [409.401](#) F.S., as applicable.

i. Designated staff shall enlist the support of the CBC's out-of-county services or Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children liaison to coordinate assessments, services, and supervision as needed.

3-6. Ongoing Assessment of a Qualifying Activity.

a. If the young adult does not appear to be participating in the agreed upon qualifying activity, designated staff shall meet the young adult and reassess the transition plan and assist in identifying another qualifying activity.

b. If after 10 days the young adult is still not participating in a qualifying activity, designated staff must proceed with discharging the young adult from EFC pursuant to Rule [65C-41.005](#), F.A.C.

c. Formal redeterminations of program eligibility shall occur annually.

d. Designated staff shall gather all documentation supporting the young adult's program eligibility and progress towards achieving transition and case plan goals.

e. Documentation demonstrating participation in a qualifying activity includes, but is not limited to:

(1) Completing secondary education or program leading to an equivalent credential.

(a) Copy of most recent report card(s) documenting that the young adult is in good standing based on their academic progress and attendance.

(b) Copy of young adult's attendance record. If the young adult has an IEP, a copy of the young adult's IEP must be accompanied by one of the items above.

(2) Enrolled in an institution that provides postsecondary or vocational education.

(a) A copy of the most recent transcript documenting that the young adult is in good standing based on their academic progress and attendance.

(b) A letter from the educational institution stating the young adult is in good standing based on their academic progress and attendance.

(3) Participation in a program or activity designed to promote or remove barriers to employment.

(a) Copy of the most recent transcript documenting the young adult is in good standing based on their academic progress and attendance.

(b) A letter from the institution stating that the young adult is in good standing based on their academic progress and attendance.

(4) Employed at least 80 hours per month.

(a) Copies of most recent pay stubs that equate to at least 80 hours a month.

(b) A letter from the employer stating that the young adult is employed and is working a minimum of 80 hours per month.

(5) Unable to participate in programs or activities full time due to a condition. A letter and/or records from a clinician supporting that the young adult has a physical, intellectual, or psychiatric condition that impairs the young adult's ability to perform one or more life activities.

3-7. Discharge and Denial Review.

a. Within 2 business days from the time that designated staff identifies that a young adult should be denied or terminated with an appealable determination reason, the appropriate adverse action form must be submitted to the regional Family Safety Program Office for approval.

(1) The Regional Managing Director or their designee shall sign the form and submit back to the designated CBC within 7 business days of receiving the adverse action form.

(2) Once the approved adverse action form has been reviewed, CBC staff shall notify the young adult of their right to appeal.

b. Young adults discharging from EFC based on their decision to leave foster care do not require a notice of adverse action.

3-8. FSFN Documentation. Designated staff shall document all activities relevant to providing services, supervision, and support to transitioning youth and young adults in FSFN. FSFN procedures specific to this chapter include:

a. EFC Program Eligibility.

(1) Initial Determination.

(a) Designated staff shall initiate the young adult's program eligibility determination in FSFN upon completion of the EFC Agreement.

(b) Upon the youth's 18th birthday, designated staff shall finalize the EFC Eligibility Determination to determine the young adult as program eligible.

(c) All youth determined ineligible will require a Supervisor Override and made eligible.

(2) Re-Entry.

(a) Designated staff shall complete the EFC Program Eligibility Determination upon completion of an EFC VPA.

(b) If the young adult is program ineligible, staff will finalize the EFC Determination after obtaining concurrence from the Department.

(3) Redetermination.

(a) Designated staff shall complete an EFC Redetermination in FSFN when a young adult has a change in qualifying activity type.

(b) Designated staff shall also complete an EFC Redetermination in FSFN annually from the date of an initial or previous redetermination.

(4) Termination.

(a) When a CBC determines a young adult should be denied or terminated from EFC, the CBC shall prepare an adverse action form and forward to the region Family Safety Program Office for approval.

(b) Upon receiving concurrence of the adverse action from the Department, CBC staff shall terminate the young adult's EFC eligibility and notify the young adult of their right to appeal.

(c) If the young adult does not request an appeal hearing within 10 business days of appeal notification, staff will change the young adults' placement to an unpaid service type.

(d) If the young adult does not request an appeal hearing within 30 days of appeal notification, staff will discharge the young adult from the removal episode.

(e) If the young adult requests an appeal, the request will be documented in the Appeal section on the Independent Living page.

(f) Once an appeal decision has been received, staff will update the Appeal section of the Independent Living page to reflect the decision.

(g) If an appeal reverses a termination decision, a new EFC eligibility determination shall be completed.

(h) If the termination decision is affirmed, the young adult shall be discharged from the removal episode and the EFC eligibility determination will remain terminated.

(i) CBC staff will notify Children's Legal Services of the appeal decision.

b. Young Adult Case.

(1) All youth who age out in the legal custody of the Department will have a Young Adult Case created upon their 18th birthday.

(2) Designated staff shall choose the Case Type of Extended Foster Care (EFC).

c. EFC Out of Home Placement.

(1) Upon a youth's 18th birthday while in the legal custody of the department, designated staff shall complete a placement change within the existing removal episode, capturing the young adult's entry into EFC.

(2) Upon re-entry to foster care, designated staff shall create a new removal episode for the young adult.

Chapter 4

POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION SERVICES AND SUPPORT

(Draft Pending)

Chapter 5
AFTERCARE SERVICES

(Draft Pending)

Chapter 6

NATIONAL YOUTH IN TRANSITION DATABASE

(Draft Pending)

Chapter 7

EXTENDED FEDERALLY FUNDED FOSTER CARE

(Obsoleted by Chapter [65C-41](#), Florida Administrative Code)