

SECTION TWO FOSTER CARE/RESOURCE HOMES

I. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS AND CORE STANDARDS

A. Approval Requirements for Resource Homes

DCS Policy 16.4 Resource Home Approval

<http://www.tn.gov/youth/dcsguide/policies/chap16/16.4.pdf>

DCS Policy 16.3 Desired Characteristics of Resource Parents

<http://www.tn.gov/youth/dcsguide/policies/chap16/16.3.pdf>

DCS Policy 16.8 Responsibilities of Approved Resource Parents

<http://www.tn.gov/youth/dcsguide/policies/chap16/16.8.pdf>

DCS Policy 16.11 Shared Resource Homes

<http://www.tn.gov/youth/dcsguide/policies/chap16/16.11.pdf>

DCS Policy 16.23 Resource Home Case Files

<http://www.tn.gov/youth/dcsguide/policies/chap16/16.23.pdf>

DCS Policy 16.27 Resource Parent Fourteen-Day Removal Notice and Right to Appeal

<http://www.tn.gov/youth/dcsguide/policies/chap16/16.27.pdf>

DCS Policy 16.29 Board Rates

<http://www.tn.gov/youth/dcsguide/policies/chap16/16.29.pdf>

DCS Policy 16.46 Child Youth Referral and Placement

<http://www.tn.gov/youth/dcsguide/policies/chap16/16.46.pdf>

1. Approval Process

Licensed private providers under contract with the State of Tennessee shall have a written policy outlining an approval process for resource parents. Agencies may develop their own protocols but the protocols must meet or exceed the DCS Standards.

The agency shall ensure resource parents and resource homes meet all requirements and standards in accordance with the DCS Provider Policy Manual (PPM) and DCS Policy. No child will be placed in a resource home prior to the resource family meeting all required standards.

2. Resource Home Eligibility Team (RHET) Protocol
 - a. The Department of Children’s Services (DCS) is subject to the rules and requirements set forth in 42 U.S.C. §672 and 45 CFR §1356.71. Known as Title IV-E of the Social Security Act (SSA), this statute sets forth standards for Federal payments for foster care and adoption assistance (sections 470-479a of the SSA). Failure to comply with these standards can result in the loss of federal funding for a limited period of time or for the duration of the foster care placement.
 - b. The Title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility Review Guide available on the Administration for Children and Families Web site (www.acf.hhs.gov), provides a consistent and uniform approach for Federal and State (as well as private provider staff) to use as resource in complying with requirements of the Title IV-E program. The guide contains policy and procedural guidance on adherence to all facets of Title IV-E compliance. It is intended to complement, not supplant, applicable statutory and regulatory provisions. In the event of conflict or inconsistency between the guide and the statute or regulations, the latter governs.
 - c. In response to these Federal requirements and to serve as a more effective steward of public funds, DCS has chosen to develop an internal infrastructure that will provide oversight for the eligibility of all provider resource home files.

ALL AGENCIES APPROVING RESOURCE HOMES MUST FOLLOW THIS POTOCOL.

Complete information on resource home approval through the RHET process is found in DCS Policy 16.4 Resource Home Approval.

B. Case File Organization

All resource home case files must be organized using DCS Policy 16.23 section headings. However, it is not necessary to organize the files in the same order. For example, an agency may prefer not to have the Home Study and Reassessments section as the first section of the file, but the agency must ensure that the heading Home Study and Reassessments is used and that all the pertinent documentation listed in that section is included.

C. Working with DCS and Agency Staff

1. Prospective resource parent(s) shall have the ability to work with the agency as demonstrated by their ability to:
 - a. work constructively within the policy framework in developing plans and meeting the needs of the child and his/her family;
 - b. accept and use professional consultation including mental health, medical, and educational assistance;
 - c. provide information to the agency regarding the needs of a child in care;
 - d. work in partnership with the agency and the Department of Children’s Services to make key decisions related to the placement of children and termination of parental rights;
 - e. maintain confidentiality regarding children and their birth parents;
 - f. provide routine transportation for the foster children placed in their home; and
 - g. participate in all health and mental health services for the child, and any other services being used to benefit a child in care.

D. Documentation of Approval for Resource Home

1. The approval letter must indicate the number and type of children for whom the home is approved.

2. The resource home approval must be signed and dated by the worker writing the resource home study, as well as two levels of supervision above the worker.
3. The date the resource home study is signed by the second level of supervision is the approval date. For those agencies without two levels of supervision, the agency director is the final approving authority; and the date s/he signs the home study is the approval date.

E. Resource Home Composition

1. The resource home record must indicate the functional capacity for the resource home.
Functional capacity is the actual number of children that the resource parent(s) can serve and is not necessarily the maximum number of children allowed in the home per DCS policy. Please note that the functional capacity cannot exceed the maximum number allowed.
2. Resource families shall not have more than a total of
 - a. three (3) foster children or
 - b. six (6) children, including birth children, foster children, and adoptive children residing full-time in the resource home.
 - c. There must be no more than three (3) children under the age of three years, including birth children, foster children, and adoptive children.
 - d. Exceptions can be made for sibling groups using the Placement Exception Request.
3. Brian A. Requirement Note: An agency under contract with DCS is held accountable for serious incidents, disruptions, number of moves, and successful discharges for all children in the program.
4. The resource home shall not provide placements for more than one agency at a time without a written agreement delineating the responsibilities of all parties involved and approved by the agency executive directors and the DCS contract authority.

F. Health Requirements

DCS Policy 16.4 Resource Home Approval

<http://www.tn.gov/youth/dcsguide/policies/chap16/16.4.pdf>

G. Income and Employment

DCS Policy 16.4 Resource Home Approval

<http://www.tn.gov/youth/dcsguide/policies/chap16/16.4.pdf>

H. Background and Other Records Checks

DCS Policy 16.4 Resource Home Approval

<http://www.tn.gov/youth/dcsguide/policies/chap16/16.4.pdf>

I. Physical Facilities Related to Approval Process

DCS Policy 16.4 Resource Home Approval

<http://www.tn.gov/youth/dcsguide/policies/chap16/16.4.pdf>

J. Expedited Placements

1. Providers do not use expedited placements.
2. Providers shall NOT place any child in an unapproved resource home regardless of who has ownership of the home (DCS or Private Provider), or whether the home is that of a relative. DCS will not reimburse providers for placements in an unapproved home regardless of who

made the request for the placement.

K. Modification or Waiver of Requirements for Approval of Resource Home

DCS Policy 16.4 Resource Home Approval

L. Resource Home Reassessment Checklist

1. A current resource home placement checklist shall be used and provided to the resource parent at the time of placement of a child in a resource home.
2. The resource parent shall be provided a completed copy of the checklist with all information that is available to the department/contract agency no later than at the time the foster care placement contract is signed.
3. The form must be signed and dated by the agency representative providing information to the accepting resource parent. A copy of the form must be provided to the resource parent.

M. Licensed private providers under contract with the State of Tennessee shall have a written policy addressing annual reassessment of resource homes which contains the information referenced in DCS Policy.

N. Resource Parent's Rights

1. See SECTION NINE, Attachment 5, Foster Parent's Bill of Rights
2. Grievance Procedures
Agencies must develop a process that mirrors the intent of the grievance procedures outlined in the policy referenced below.

DCS Policy 16.27 Resource Parents' Fourteen-day Removal Notice and Right to Appeal

3. **DCS Employees as resource parents, reference DCS Policy 16.21**
<http://www.tn.gov/youth/dcsguide/policies/chap16/16.21.pdf>

O. Board Rates DCS Policy 16.29 Board Rates

In accordance with the Brian A Settlement Agreement, "all resource parent payment room and board rates, including the rates of resource parents under the supervision of private agencies, will at a minimum meet USDA standards and will be adjusted annually to be no lower than USDA standards for the cost of raising children within this region."

The rates are posted through the DCS Provider Page on the DCS web site.

http://www.state.tn.us/youth/providers/prov_policies.htm

II. STANDARD FOSTER CARE SERVICES

A. General Characteristics

1. Foster Care services are for children and youth in need of safe, nurturing care and guidance in a private home outside their family. Their needs can be met through services delivered by trained resource parents. These resource parents are to be supervised and supported by agency staff, working together to meet the goal of permanency based on the best interest of the child. The families of children in foster care are offered support services to facilitate reunification whenever appropriate. If reunification is not an option other considerations include kinship care, adoption or guardianship.
2. Tennessee's Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) suggests child may be in need of standard foster care services if the child/youth is scoring low (0 or 1) or has only one rating of 2 or 3 within the domain of child behavioral or emotional needs, such as psychosis, anxiety, or adjustment to trauma. Any ratings within the domain of risk behaviors should also be low (0 or 1).
3. Child/youth may have either a history of mild mental health or behavioral concerns that must be monitored or observed to prevent the increase in severity or have current emotional, behavioral indicators which are mild or transient in nature. These may manifest themselves in difficulty coping socially, occupationally, or in school functioning.
4. These children/youth appear to be able to form family attachments and participate in a family and community activities without posing a serious danger to themselves or others. Children/youth who meet criteria for this level of care cannot be excluded from admission based on their adjudication when their risk is moderate to low or when they have successfully completed a treatment program.

B. Admission/Clinical Criteria

1. Juvenile Justice Children
Levels of care decisions and intervention needs for JJ youth are based on the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI), a standardized validated instrument. Referral for specific level of care will be based on results of the YLS/CMI combined with other relevant factors.
2. Social Services Children (Dependent, Neglect and Unruly (D/N&U)
Levels of care decisions and interventions needs for D/N&U children are based on the Child & Adolescent Needs & Strengths (CANS) Assessment, a standardized validated instrument. Referral for specific level of care will be based on results of the CANS combined with other relevant factors.
3. The final determination for placement must be made through the Child and Family Team Meeting (CFTM). Children accepted for the service are determined to be unable to receive the parental care they need in their own home.

C. Personnel

1. Provider agencies will not exceed their accrediting body's standards for caseload numbers or will follow the Brian A. Settlement Agreement numbers as follows.
Standard Foster Care: 1 caseworker per 20 cases
2. Resource parents have no more than three of their own minor children in the home and no more than three foster children are placed in a resource home at one time, unless a sibling group is to be placed together or there is other justification for an exception, necessitating a PER.

3. Private duty nursing: The use of a TennCare nurse does not replace the need for a resource parent or other adult caregiver to be present in the home with the child. The Bureau of TennCare rules state “To the extent that private duty nursing services are provided to a person under 18 years of age, a responsible adult (other than the private duty nurse) **must be present** at all times in the home during provision of the private duty nursing services in order to assure the child’s non-health care needs are addressed. General childcare services and other non-hands-on assistance such as cleaning and meal preparation will not be provided by a private duty nurse.” (Paragraph 80-Private Duty Nursing Services of rule 1200-13-13-.01 of TennCare rules)

D. Resource Parent Training
DCS Policy 16.4 and 16.8

<http://tennessee.gov/youth/dcsguide/policies/chap16/D-RHETProtocol.pdf>

1. All new resource parents are required to complete Parents as Tender Healers (PATH) training and core topics as described in DCS Policy. **Training hours are to be documented in the current child welfare information system.**
Parents providing services to medically fragile or Level II Continuum Foster Care or Juvenile Justice Youth have additional required hours. See the specific service for details.
2. Each resource parent must complete 15 hours of in-service training each year to remain in good standing. **Completion of these trainings will be documented in the Resource Home Maintenance Database and maintained in the agency resource home file.**
3. PATH Training waiver for Other Adults in the home in non-parenting role TN Kids requires a waiver date to be entered into the current child welfare information system for those household members not completing PATH training. Once a provider completes the appropriate background checks on the household members that will not assume a parental role, the provider will document and sign a statement that confirms the non-parenting role and file the statement in the resource home case file. Providers are responsible for entering the date of this form into the current child welfare information system.

E. Individualized Treatment Plan

1. Within thirty (30) days of placement, a written treatment plan will be developed by the provider agency with inclusion of all stakeholders using a Child and Family Team Meeting approach. This plan must support the permanency goal(s) of the DCS Permanency Plan and should provide details specific to the agency’s role in supporting the child and family in achieving permanency. The treatment plan, reviewed quarterly, must include child and family visitation as detailed in the child’s Permanency Plan. (See Section One, Core Standards, Chapter III for complete information on treatment planning requirements.)
2. Contract agency case managers must address identified needs of the CANS and YLS assessments in the treatment planning. Any CANS domain that scores a “2 or “3” or a YLS score of “high” or “moderate” should always be considered in the treatment plan.
3. The agency provides case management, consultation and coordination of services to meet the identified needs of the child, family, and resource family.
4. The agency shall engage in strengths-based planning which shall be a focus of the treatment plan. Review of the CANS strength-based items is recommended to assist in planning.

F. Agency Responsibility/Services

1. The agency shall meet the standards set forth in Section One, Core Standards
2. The agency obtains, coordinates, and supervises, with the ongoing participation of the resource parents, any needed medical, behavioral, educational, recreational, remedial, court hearings including Foster Care Review Boards or other specialized services and resources as described in the treatment plan.
3. The agency provides case management, consultation and coordination of services to meet the identified needs of the child, family, and resource family.
4. The agency shall engage in strengths-based planning which shall be a focus of the treatment plan. Review of the CANS strength-based items is recommended to assist in planning.
5. The agency shall identify community resources to help youth integrate into the community (i.e., community center clubs, churches, sports).
6. The agency shall assist youth in identification and development and maintenance of talents, interests, vocational skills or hobbies.
7. The agency shall assist and support the child in receiving outpatient therapy, if indicated, up to three times a month.
8. The agency shall coordinate and monitor the evaluation of psychopharmacological medication administration. If this treatment is indicated for a child/youth receiving foster care services, appointments for medication review should occur on a quarterly basis, at a minimum.

G. Support to the Child/Youth

1. Each child served is:
 - a. provided safe, stable care in a nurturing environment to facilitate permanency as well as to promote their development and growth;
 - b. provided guidance, structure, protection, while offering participation/inclusion in as many positive experiences as possible;
 - c. prepared for placement with a specific resource family to include help with adjustment;
 - d. encouraged to maintain contact with their family or "circle of support" and provided with support in making such arrangements, unless specifically contraindicated because of the child's safety;
 - e. provided with information about family activities and progress toward the goal of permanency;
 - f. provided with assistance in maintaining the relationship with siblings through visits (no less than monthly), and shared activities unless contraindicated because of the child's safety or contradictory to treatment plan or court order, if they are not placed in the same resource home (includes Juvenile Justice Youth in YDCs);
 - g. prepared for return home or for placement in a stable, nurturing, permanent environment; and
 - h. provided Interdependent Living services in accordance with **DCS Policy 16.52**
 - i. provided with developmentally appropriate activities and supportive services designed to enable them to prepare to lead self-sufficient adult lives, in accordance with their treatment plan.
2. Resource parents are expected to participate fully in therapeutic and medical services provided for the child/youth as determined by the provider agency. These activities extend to social and educational services (e.g., PTA meetings, parent-teacher conferences, etc.) as

well as the provision of opportunities for the child to participate in appropriate extra-curricular activities (sports, dance, band, Scouts, etc.) in order to enhance his/her strengths and address needs.

H. Support to the Permanency Family

1. The agency shall assist in the identification and coordination of supportive services to the child's permanency family enabling them to plan for the child's reunification or concurrent permanency goal. The agency will coordinate with the DCS FSW. Documentation should include any services in progress and the status of any pending referrals. Such supports may include but are not limited to:
 - a. child care
 - b. homemaker and home health aide services
 - c. parent education
 - d. respite care
 - e. transportation services
 - f. vocational and educational assistance
 - g. health and mental health care
 - h. substance use or abuse treatment services
 - i. domestic violence services
 - j. housing referral and assistance
2. Unless the child's safety would be compromised, services are provided to help the child's permanency family maintain and enhance parental functioning, parental care, and parental ties. Documentation of reasonable efforts toward reunification must be recorded in the child's record.
3. The agency worker must document a meeting with the child's parent(s) without the child at least one time per month. Goals for these meetings include:
 - a. evaluate safety and well-being, and permanency
 - b. monitor and document service delivery
 - c. assess and support the achievement of permanency and other treatment plan goals
4. Case records contain information regarding the agency's efforts to promote Permanency/Treatment Plan goals. Documentation will record, in detail, the agency's attempts to assist the family in:
 - a. making a permanency plan for their child,
 - b. visiting and maintaining contact with their child,
 - c. overcoming barriers to their involvement in the child's care, contact or visitation, and
 - d. utilizing the resources the agency offers to prepare the family for reunification.

I. Support to the Resource Family

1. Resource parents assume an integral role in providing care and services for children placed in their homes.
2. Supports to Resource families include but are not limited to:
 - a. board rates to meet or exceed the basic board rates outlined in ***DCS Policy 16. 8, Attachment 1,***
 - b. transportation assistance,
 - c. training (individual and group)/ongoing in-service as well as any required/requested specialized training to meet the needs of each child placed in the home,
 - d. case management consultation and coordination,

- e. respite services and
 - f. counseling/crisis intervention.
3. Agency will support Resource family in coordinating services to children, including, but not limited to the following:
 - a. school liaison services,
 - b. child/family visitation coordination,
 - c. social services referrals, consultation, coordination and,
 - d. medical/dental/mental health appointments for the child.

J. Education of the Child/Youth

1. Children in foster care typically attend public school.
2. Providers should meet all criteria outlined in Section 9, Attachment 9, titled *Educational Standards for DCS Providers*.
3. Using the CANS assessment tool, if any Educational domain (attendance, achievement or behavior) score is 2 or 3, OR if the YLS scores as “high” or “moderate”, these factors should be addressed within the treatment plan.
4. The agency’s educational liaison will collaborate with the DCS Education Specialist to address any educational concerns that need continued support or have service needs such as special education, zero tolerance, education stability, etc.
5. Some students who have zero tolerance offenses may require an alternative educational setting outside of public school. The Regional Education Specialist should be notified in these instances. (A zero tolerance offense does not always indicate a need for a different setting.)

K. Program Monitoring/Utilization Review

1. The agency must record all face-to-face visits through the current child welfare information system.
2. The agency must participate in any other reviews deemed necessary by DCS or the courts.
3. The agency must participate fully with DCS PAR monitoring and RHET.
4. The agency will respond and provide immediately all required documentation as requested by TennCare Consumer Advocate (TCCA) or Tennessee Alliance for Legal Services (TALS).

L. Discharge Criteria

1. The Child and Family Team will review the permanency plan at scheduled intervals or when needed. The CFT will determine when goals for permanency have been met and will recommend discharge with input from all members of the child/youth’s team.
2. Discharge must include a plan that includes but is not limited to, consideration of the child’s:
 - a. Educational needs,
 - b. Additional support for stability for the child and family,
 - c. A plan for accessing community support,
 - d. An inventory of the child’s personal items to insure availability at time of discharge,
 - e. Medical and behavioral needs (continuation or referral for services),
 - f. Accessing health insurance,
 - g. Needs identified by CANS and YLS that still need to be addressed on trial home placement or exit from care.

III. MEDICALLY FRAGILE FOSTER CARE SERVICES

A. General Characteristics

1. The Medically Fragile Foster Care program provides recruitment, training, and support services to resource parents to meet the needs of children/youth who are appropriate for family-based care but require a higher level of medical support, intervention, and case coordination.
2. Resource parents are specially trained to care for children/youth with extreme medical needs that cannot be met in their family homes. Some of these resource parents are also trained to manage behavioral and emotional disorders in addition to the training required to meet the medical needs of this population.
3. Due to the needs of these children/youth, agencies approved to provide medically fragile foster care services must be willing and able to accept emergency and after-hours referrals.
4. The goals/discharge criteria for children/youth in Medically Fragile Foster Care are permanency through reunification, kinship care, adoption, or guardianship.
5. Resource homes must be within 45 minutes of a local medical facility and emergency room.

B. Admission/Clinical Criteria

1. A child/youth requiring medically fragile foster care has significant medically-oriented care needs related to a serious illness or condition (documented by a licensed health care provider) that may become unstable and change abruptly, resulting in a life-threatening situation.
2. The child's/youth's care needs may be related to a chronic and/or progressive illness or a more acute, time-limited condition.
3. The child/youth may have a severe disability that requires the routine use of medical devices or assistive technology to compensate for the loss of usefulness of a body function needed to participate in activities of daily living.
4. The conditions/care needs of child/youth requiring medically fragile foster care are evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the DCS Regional Nurse.
5. Children/youth who are determined to need medically fragile foster care and who also have behavioral and/or emotional conditions may be considered for a higher level of care within the agency's resource home network if the decision is supported by the CTFM.

C. Personnel

1. The agency will meet all criteria outlined in Core Standards for Foster Care.
2. Ratio of case work staff to cases does not exceed 1:10.
3. Resource homes with only one adult in the home may not care for more than one child/youth requiring medically fragile foster care and may not have more than two additional children/youth in the home.
4. Resource homes with two adults in the home shall not care for more than two children/youth requiring medically fragile foster care and may not have more than two additional children/youth in addition in the home.
5. Any exceptions to these requirements will be addressed through the Placement Exception Request process.

D. Resource Parent Training **DCS Policy 16.4 and 16.8**

1. Pre-service:
In addition to what is required for Standard Foster Care pre-service, all newly approved resource parents for medically fragile services are required to complete an additional **fifteen**

(15) hours of medically-oriented specialized training prior to caring for children/youth which is necessary to competently care for the greater needs of the foster children/youth at this level. *Resource parents shall receive specialized training on the special medical needs of each child/youth to be placed in their home.* A change in resource parent requires coordination with child/youth's health care provider and DCS Regional Nurse regarding specialized training on medical needs of the child/youth.

In addition to the specialized training described above, other training topics may include:

- a. Growth and development
- b. Nutrition
- c. Medical disabilities
- d. Orientation to Assistive Technology
- e. Seizure Management
- f. Caring for Drug-Exposed Children

2. In-service:

Resource parents will meet all criteria for in-service training as outlined in Standard Foster Care.

E. Individualized Treatment Plans

The agency will meet all criteria outlined in Standard Foster Care.

F. Agency Responsibility/Services

1. The agency shall meet the standards set forth in Standard Foster Care in addition to meeting the needs of the special population of children/ youth needing medically fragile foster care services.
2. Foster family care is provided for and on behalf of the child/youth under a plan that includes services for the child's/youth's parents and supervision of and support services for the resource parents.

G. Support to the Child/Youth

The agency will meet all criteria outlined in Standard Foster Care.

1. Children are provided with developmentally appropriate activities and supportive services designed to enable them to prepare to lead self-sufficient adult lives in accordance with their treatment plan.
2. For instances in which a hospital requires a sitter twenty-four (24) hours per day, seven (7) days per week; twelve (12) hours of sitter services shall be provided by the resource parent/private provider agency. The additional twelve (12) hours shall be provided through the delegated authority and funded by DCS.

H. Support to the Permanency Family

The agency will meet all criteria outlined in Standard Foster Care.

I. Support to the Resource Family

The agency will meet all criteria outlined in Standard Foster Care.

J. Education of the Child/Youth

1. Children in foster care typically attend public school.
2. Providers should meet all criteria outlined in Section 9, Attachment 9, titled *Educational Standards for DCS Providers*.

K. Program Monitoring/Utilization Review

1. The agency provides a monthly summary of the child/youth's progress and current status. The monthly summary should be sent to the child's/youth's Regional SAT Coordinator and

TennCare advocate.

2. The DCS Regional Nurse will review, on a quarterly basis, each child/youth placed in the medically fragile foster care program. This review may include face-to-face visits and/or other means of communication with the child/youth and resource parent(s). This visit will be in conjunction with the Agency case manager and DCS FSW when possible.
3. The DCS Regional Nurse will make a recommendation for a child's/youth's continued placement in the medically fragile program based on monthly summaries from the agency, medical reports and progress updates from the child's/youth's medical provider(s), and observations during the quarterly visits/communication with the child/youth and resource parent(s).
4. The DCS Regional Nurse will send written notification of the medically fragile foster care recommendation to the following:
 - a. Agency Case Manager, Agency Director or Supervisor
 - b. DCS FSW
 - c. DCS Team Leader
 - d. DCS Team Coordinator
 - e. DCS Placement Services Division
 - f. DCS Regional Administrator

Note: The above is only a list of those persons who will receive the written recommendation from the DCS Regional Nurse. It is not meant to be a list of persons invited to a CFTM. If a CFTM is indicated, the DCS FSW will send notifications to any and all interested parties.

L. Discharge Criteria

1. If the DCS Regional Nurse determines the child/youth no longer needs medically fragile foster care, the recommendation will include a request for a CFTM. The DCS FSW should convene a CFTM as soon as possible but no later than seven (7) days from the date of the recommendation notice from the DCS Regional Nurse.
2. The written recommendation from the DCS Regional Nurse that the child/youth no longer needs medically fragile foster care is simply a trigger for a CFTM. It does not change the placement or the rate.
3. If a child/youth is no longer recommended for the medically fragile foster care program, a decision will be made at the CFTM whether the child/youth will continue placement with the current resource parent(s) and transition to a lower level of care or if the child/youth will be moved to a new placement. If the child/youth is to remain with the current resource parent(s), the rate change will take place no later than 14 days after the date of the CFTM.
4. If the child/youth is moved to a new placement, the rate change will take effect on the date of the placement change.

IV. CONTINUUM FOSTER CARE SERVICES

All level II and level III continuum services must adhere to the guidelines established herein.

A. General Characteristics

1. The program is specifically designed to accommodate the needs of emotionally disturbed and behaviorally disordered children who are at risk for failure or have failed in regular resource homes, have been unable to live with their own families, or who are going through a transitional period from group care as part of the process of return to family and community. These youth require behavioral intervention, case coordination and counseling/therapy services.
2. A continuum foster care program includes recruitment, training, and support services to resource parents trained to meet the needs of these children. Resource parents providing continuum foster care services may require more frequent respite, support services and training in behavioral intervention.
3. Agencies providing continuum foster care services will follow all policies, criteria, and guidelines contained in the Standard Foster Care section as well as the additional guidelines as follows and indicated in this Continuum Foster Care Section.
4. The goal/discharge criteria for children in continuum foster care is permanency through reunification, kinship care, adoption or guardianship.

B. Admission/ Clinical Criteria

1. Children who are appropriate for continuum foster care can include but are not limited to:
 - a. those who have successfully completed higher levels of treatment, including sex offender treatment programs,
 - b. those who do not pose an ongoing risk to themselves or the community, or
 - c. those who have been diagnosed with a psychotic disorder that is adequately managed through medication.
2. Children's needs are identified through a Child and Family Team Meeting as to the appropriateness for continuum foster care, with age-appropriate youth included in the decision-making process.
3. The agency may not reject children who have been determined to meet the scope of services.

C. Personnel

1. The ratio of case worker to child does not exceed 1:10.
2. Resource families shall have no more than two (2) continuum foster children in the resource home. Exceptions can be made for sibling groups.
3. Resource parents providing continuum foster care services must have the maturity to be able to care for children/youth needing this higher level of service. It is recommended that these resource parents be at least twenty-five (25) years of age. If the resource parent is not at least twenty-five (25) years of age, the agency can still approve the parent by documenting that the parent has shown the maturity to be able to perform these services. Documentation can take the form of letters of reference and interviews discussing this issue specifically. Currently approved parents not meeting this age limit will remain approved (grandfathered in).

4. Resource families should have at least one year of experience as active foster parents. If this is not possible for a particular family and if the family is otherwise a good candidate, the agency can approve the home with documentation of additional support by the agency to the family for one year or until the family has gained the necessary experience to be able to provide the continuum care services needed without the additional support from the agency.

D. Resource Parent Training See DCS Policy 16.4

1. Pre-service: In addition to what is required for standard foster care, newly approved continuum foster care resource parents will complete 15 hours of specialized pre-service training using a therapeutic curriculum prior to children being placed in the home. The following topics are recommended as part of the additional 15 hours. Other topics can be used but must be therapeutic in nature to meet the needs of the children/youth the parents will be working with:
 - a. Child trauma
 - b. Crisis Intervention/De-escalation
 - c. Targeted Child-Specific Mental Health Diagnosis and Treatment Strategies
 - d. Working with Sexually Reactive Youth
 - e. Child Development
 - f. Advanced Medication Administration
 - g. Grief and Loss Associated with Entering Foster Care
2. In-service: The agency will meet all criteria and documentation as outlined in Standard Foster Care.

E. Individualized Treatment Plans

The agency will meet all criteria as outlined in Standard Foster Care to include strength-based planning, inclusion of family and child, visitation requirements, provisions for quarterly update, inclusion of resource parents.

Contract agency case managers will use the CANS (for all youth) and the YLS assessments (if a Juvenile Justice Youth) in formulating their treatment plans. Any CANS domain of “2” or “3” will be addressed in the treatment plan. Any YLS score of “high” or “moderate” will be addressed in the treatment plan.

F. Agency Responsibility/Services

The agency will meet all criteria as outlined in Standard Foster Care.

G. Support to the Child/Youth

The agency will meet all criteria as outlined in Standard Foster Care.

Each child served:

1. will receive a mental health assessment to determine need for on-going treatment,
2. is prepared for placement with a specific resource family to include help with adjustment,
3. is encouraged to maintain contact with their family or “circle of support” and provided with support in making such arrangements, unless specifically contraindicated because of the child’s safety,
4. is provided with information about family activities and progress toward the goal of permanency,
5. is provided with assistance in maintaining the relationship with siblings through visits and shared activities,

6. is prepared for return home or for placement in a stable, nurturing, permanent environment, and
7. is provided interdependent living services in accordance with DCS policy on interdependent living.

H. Support to the Permanency Family

1. The agency will meet all criteria as outlined in Standard Foster Care.
2. The agency will support and mentor relationships between the child's family and resource family regarding therapeutic issues in accordance with the permanency plan. Contacts must be documented.

I. Support to the Resource Family

The agency will meet all criteria as outlined in Standard Foster Care.

J. Education of the Child/Youth

1. Children in foster care typically attend public school.
2. Students may require additional in-school supports to maintain positive school behavior.
3. Providers should meet all criteria outlined in Section 9, Attachment 9, *titled Educational Standards for DCS Providers*.

K. Monitoring Progress/Utilization Review

The agency will meet all criteria as outlined in Standard Foster Care.

L. Discharge Criteria

1. The agency will meet all criteria as outlined in Standard Foster Care through the use of the Child and Family Team Meeting process.

V. FOSTER CARE SERVICES FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE YOUTH

A. General Characteristics

Youth are adjudicated delinquent and committed to DCS for services.

B. Admission/Clinical Criteria

The agency will meet all criteria as outlined in Standard Foster Care.

1. Youth adjudicated delinquent and committed to DCS as a result of a felony offense(s) and youth having a history of convictions for felony offenses shall **not** be placed in family resource homes prior to having received residential treatment unless the committing juvenile court has been notified of the planned resource home placement and the deputy commissioner for Juvenile Justice Programs or his/her designee has approved such placement.
2. Step-down and placement in a family resource home may be made following a period of residential treatment without notification to the committing court or approval from the deputy commissioner/designee.
3. Youth adjudicated delinquent and committed to DCS as a result of misdemeanor offenses and in the absence of prior felony offenses may be placed in family resource homes following notification of the committing court.
4. If the delinquent child/youth was adjudicated as a result of charges regarding violence against a person (including sexual offences), risk to other children residing in the resource home will be assessed prior to placement.
5. When placing a youth in a resource home, the agency should share all available information regarding the youth's delinquent record with the resource family.

C. Personnel

The agency will meet all criteria as outlined in Standard Foster Care.

D. Resource Parent Training

The agency will meet all criteria as outlined in Standard Foster Care with the addition of **9 hours of Juvenile Justice Training** before a resource home can care for a Juvenile Justice child/youth.

E. Individualized Treatment Plan

The agency will meet all criteria as outlined in Standard Foster Care.

F. Agency Responsibility/Services

The agency will meet all criteria as outlined in Standard Foster Care.

G. Support to the Child/Youth

The agency will meet all criteria as outlined in Standard Foster Care. The agency will work cooperatively with the DCS FSW for passes.

DCS Policy 12.5 Passes for Youth Adjudicated Delinquent

<http://www.tn.gov/youth/dcsguide/policies/chap12/12.5.pdf>

H. Support to the Permanency Family

The agency will meet all criteria as outlined in Standard Foster Care.

I. Support to the Resource Family

The agency will meet all criteria as outlined in Standard Foster Care.

J. Education of the Youth

1. Children in foster care typically attend public school.

2. Providers should meet all criteria outlined in Section 9, Attachment 9, titled Educational Standards for DCS Providers.

K. Program Monitoring/Utilization Review

The agency will meet all criteria as outlined in Standard Foster Care.

L. Discharge Criteria

The agency will meet all criteria as outlined in Standard Foster Care and will follow DCS Policy.

DCS Policy 12.1 Return to Home Placement: Youth Adjudicated Delinquent

<http://www.tn.gov/youth/dcsguide/policies/chap12/12.1.pdf>

VI. INTERDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES

DCS Policy 16.51, Interdependent Living Plan

<http://www.tn.gov/youth/dcsguide/policies/chap16/16.51.pdf>

DCS Policy 16.52, Eligibility for Interdependent Living and Voluntary Post-Custody Services

<http://www.tn.gov/youth/dcsguide/policies/chap16/16.52.pdf>

DCS Policy 16.53, Identifying and Accessing Interdependent Living Services

<http://www.tn.gov/youth/dcsguide/policies/chap16/16.53.pdf>

DCS Policy 16.54, Provision of Voluntary Post-Custody Custody Services to Young Adults

<http://www.tn.gov/youth/dcsguide/policies/chap16/16.54.pdf>

DCS Policy 16.55 Post-Secondary Scholarships: Educational and Training Vouchers and State-funded Scholarship

<http://www.tn.gov/youth/dcsguide/policies/chap16/16.54.pdf>

DCS 16.56 Living Allowance

<http://www.tn.gov/youth/dcsguide/policies/chap16/16.56.pdf>

A. General Characteristics

1. The program is specifically designed to help youth and young adults develop supportive relationships with adults (facilitate permanency), acquire an array of life skills, encourage the recognition and utilization of community resources, and increase self-esteem and self-empowerment. Provision of these services must promote a Chafee Foster Care Independent Living goal, to include educational progress, employment, maintenance of physical and mental health care, housing opportunities, the formation of supportive adult relationships, knowledge of, and access to, community resources, the acquisition of skills to increase financial stability and the improvement of daily life skills.
2. In order to access services through DCS, contact the Regional Independent Living Specialist to begin the assessment process. It is critical that providers/family services workers do not enroll students in postsecondary placement without the knowledge and or approval of the independent living personnel in their region. Specific documentation is required in order to be compliant with federal/state policies, receive reimbursement, and achieve quality care for young adults.

B. Admission/Clinical Criteria

1. DCS shall provide Interdependent Living Services to youth in state custody 14 to 18 years of age. Youth adjudicated delinquent and in state custody may receive specified Interdependent Living services up to their 19th birthday, commensurate with their placement status.
2. DCS shall provide Voluntary Post-Custody Services to eligible young adults exiting custody at age 18, or up to their 19th birthday, and requesting to receive such services from DCS. Voluntary Post-Custody Services may be provided up to the 21st birthday, and may be extended up to the 23rd birthday based on the young adult's status and continued eligibility.

3. Youth 15 years of age or older who exit custody to adoption or subsidized permanent guardianship may be eligible for Educational and Training Vouchers (ETV).
4. Youth 16 years of age or older who exit custody to reunification may be eligible for Educational and Training Vouchers (ETV).
5. Young adults, in conjunction with their Child and Family Teams, shall determine the scope and appropriateness of service needs within the overall margins of eligibility.

C. Personnel

The agency will meet Foster Care Standards as applicable.

D. Resource Parent Training

The agency will meet Foster Care Standards as applicable.

E. Individualized Treatment Plans

1. Every youth in out-of-home care fourteen (14) years of age or older shall have an Interdependent Living Plan (ILP) included as part of the Permanency Plan to help prepare youth for a successful transition to adulthood.
2. As a component of the Permanency Plan, the ILP shall be developed concurrently with the Permanency Plan within the context of a Child and Family Team Meeting. Youth age fourteen (14) or older must complete the necessary life skill assessments in advance of the plan development. Any youth in out-of-home care who is age seventeen (17) years and six (6) months or older shall have goals included in the Interdependent Living Plan that address transition to adulthood from state custody. Young adults receiving DCS Voluntary Post-Custody Services shall have an Interdependent Living Plan developed and updated annually.

F. Agency Responsibility/Services

The agency shall meet the standards set forth in DCS Practice Model 8-100,8-102,8-105, 8-106, 8-104, 8-107.

G. Support to the Child/Youth

All youth meeting eligibility requirements for Interdependent Living Services must receive Life Skill Instruction as a component of Interdependent Living Services. The scope of instruction should be consistent with the life skill assessment results and recommendations, and provided in accordance with the youth or young adult's development capabilities. All eligible youth and young adults shall receive instruction in the following areas as a minimum requirement:

- Budgeting;
- Building Credit;
- Consumer Competence;
- Nutrition and food preparation;
- Stress management and coping;
- Time Management;
- Interpersonal relationships and communication;
- Problem-solving and decision-making;
- Hygiene, self-care and personal safety;
- Exercising legal rights and responsibilities, such as voting, legal representation, self-advocacy, youth rights, and youth boards.
- Education on housing issues, to include locating safe and affordable housing options, tenants rights and responsibilities, housing assistance;

- Instruction on education issues, to include assistance with developing an appropriate education plan, completing secondary education and accessing resources for post-secondary educational institutions or vocational programs;
- Instruction on obtaining and maintaining employment to include the development of good work habits and skills, self-confidence and presentation skills, resume writing, completion of job application, job seeking skills, and the use of local employment assistance and placement programs.
- Interdependent Living Wraparound funding as a resource to support the provisions of Interdependent Living for eligible youth and young adults. These resources are administered as a flexible funding resource to support goals as established in the Interdependent Living Plan.

H. Support to the Permanency Family

The agency will work with permanency family as needed.

I. Support to the Resource Family

The agency will meet all criteria outlined in Standard Foster Care.

J. Education of the Child/Youth

1. Youth will receive instruction on education issues that will include assistance in developing an appropriate education plan, completing secondary application and accessing resources for post secondary educational institutions or vocational programs.
2. DCS will provide assistance through Chaffee Educational and Training Vouchers (ETV) toward the cost of attendance, as defined by the Higher Education Act of 1965 and provide assistance through the State Funded Scholarship to eligible youth and young adults.

K. Program Monitoring/Utilization Review

The Office of Interdependent Living will monitor and promote the ongoing connections for youth and young adults in state care by facilitating a network of relevant supports with caring adults and tangible resources, training and involving professionals, caretakers and advocates regarding these supports and services, and empowering youth and young adults to utilize such means to become confident and productive individuals.

L. Discharge Criteria

1. The Child and Family Team will review goals and progress at recommended intervals.
2. The Team, with the involvement of the youth, will make recommendations for discontinuing services.
3. The agency will meet all criteria outlined in Core Standards.