

TN Strong Homes

What are TN Strong Homes?

Tennessee Strong Homes help kids who have an intellectual or developmental disability (IDD), that are currently in Tennessee state custody, by providing them with short-term placement opportunities that focus on those children who have complex/acute medical needs and are awaiting longer-term placement within the community. Often, these are children that are currently placed in children's hospitals and/or emergency rooms. In partnership with the TN Department of Children's Services (DCS), TN Strong Homes (TNSH) will provide 24-hour supportive care, with access and oversight by appropriate medical/behavioral support staff, while living in a community-based setting. Currently, there are three TN Strong Homes across the state, located in each of DDA's grand regions, with a total of 12-beds available for short-term placement and stabilization.

Eligibility

- ◆ All referrals for TN Strong Homes will come from DCS Director of Nursing
- ◆ Children must have a diagnosis of an intellectual or developmental disability with extensive or specialized medical care that require ongoing supportive care but no longer require inpatient hospitalization.
- ◆ Children must be in state custody at time of referral.

How does the program work?

- ◆ DCS and/or hospital medical staff identify children currently in DCS custody that have an IDD diagnosis, with extensive or specialized medical care that exceeds a foster home setting, and DCS makes a referral to the DDA TN Strong Homes.
- ◆ DDA will use medical records, progress notes, case notes sent over in the referral, and in-person assessments (where possible) to make an eligibility determination.
- ◆ If eligible for TN Strong Homes, the TNSH interdisciplinary staff works with DCS and hospital medical staff, to facilitate placement of the child into a TN Strong Home.
- ◆ Once placed in a TN Strong Home, the child is provided with developmentally appropriate activities and supportive services designed to enable them to prepare to achieve maximum medical self-sufficiency in accordance with their treatment plan.
- ◆ While placed in a TN Strong Home, the child will live, play, and learn in the least restrictive environment possible, including enrolling in public school, and participating in the community while being continuously supported and cared for by an interdisciplinary team comprised of direct support staff, therapists, clinicians, and medical providers.
- ◆ As the child stabilizes and a longer-term placement becomes appropriate as the least restrictive environment, TN Strong Homes will work with DCS to transition the child out of the TN Strong Home and into a foster, adoptive or biological home setting as warranted.

Important Notes:

- ◆ DCS will continue all aspects of their normal case management protocols, including arranging for family visitation of the child (guidelines and/or restrictions surround visits), holding Child and Family Team meetings (CFTM), DCS Family Social Worker (FSW) will meet with the child monthly, and the DCS FSW will actively continue searching for longer-term placement opportunities for the child as warranted.
- ◆ TNSH staff will participate in the DCS permanency planning as a member of the DCS CFTM at the request of the DCS FSW.