

Services to Youth Ages 18 - 21

Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families

Policy: 700.0240

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The Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families is responsible for the delivery of appropriate mental health services to children with serious emotional disturbance and/or functional developmental disabilities as defined in RIGL 42-72-5 and to provide aftercare services and supports to youth between the ages of 18 through 21 who were formerly in foster care.

Once Family Court jurisdiction has been terminated or if there is no Family Court involvement, youth reaching eighteen (18) years of age and who were receiving services from DCYF prior to or at the time of the youth's eighteenth (18th) birthday will be eligible to receive transitional services and/or supports on a voluntary basis in one of the following ways:

- Continue DCYF Involvement with voluntary services and supports for youth who are seriously emotionally disturbed (SED) or youth with functional developmental disabilities (DD). These youth are a priority population and will remain open to the Department and may remain in their current placements. Such youth may be eligible to receive services funded through the State Managed Health Care Program in accordance with RIGL 42-72-5 (d).
- Close to DCYF upon acceptance into an Aftercare Services Program those youth who are currently residing in out-of-home placements and who require assistance with accessing housing, employment, postsecondary education and medical insurance coverage.
- Close to DCYF those youth who can remain safely with their parents or relatives, who can go to a parent or a relative or who otherwise have a viable transition plan. These youth will be provided access to coverage for medical insurance.

The primary goal of these services is for participants to achieve an appropriate level of independence and to recognize and accept their personal responsibility for the transition from adolescence to adulthood. All services and supports are voluntary. The aftercare services component prepares youth for independence, helps former foster care youth to continue preparing for the challenges and opportunities presented by adulthood while receiving services and supports.

Services to Youth Ages 18 - 21

Procedure From Policy 700.0240: Services to Youth Ages 18 - 21

- A. Youth who are seriously emotionally disturbed (SED) or youth with functional developmental disabilities (DD)
1. Eligibility - A youth must meet all of the following requirements to be eligible for aftercare services:
 - a. The youth must be a resident of the State of Rhode Island.
 - b. The youth must be at least 18 years of age but less than 21 years of age and the youth must have been in the care and custody of DCYF or receiving services from DCYF prior to attaining their 18th birthday.
 2. Responsibility - A youth or a youth's legal guardian must voluntarily agree to continue to receive services in accordance with the Department's case plan.
 3. Services and Supports - Youth in an out-of-home placements for reasons of having a serious emotional disturbance and/or a functional developmental disability and who are still in need of DCYF-delivered services will remain open to the Department and shall continue to receive services, including residential placement, in accordance with the service plan.
 4. Termination
 - a. Services and supports shall be terminated when any of the following conditions apply:
 - i. The youth achieves service plan goals or fails to follow service plan components and expectations.
 - ii. The youth voluntarily withdraws from the services.
 - iii. The youth is no longer a resident of Rhode Island.
 - iv. The youth reaches twenty-one (21) years of age.
 - b. A youth who voluntarily withdraws from the services may opt to re-engage in a service plan within six months of the youth's withdrawal from services.
 5. Appeals - Any individual who is determined to be ineligible for SED/DD services and/or who is dissatisfied with the DCYF service plan developed under this section shall be entitled to file an administrative appeal with the Department in accordance with DCYF Policy 100.0055, Complaints and Hearings.
- B. Aftercare Services for Former Foster Care Youth Who Will Be Closed to DCYF Upon Attaining the age of eighteen (18)
1. Eligibility - A youth must meet all of the following requirements to be eligible for aftercare services:
 - a. The youth must be a resident of the State of Rhode Island.
 - b. The youth must be at least 18 years of age but less than 21 years of age.
 - i. The youth must leave foster care on or after the youth's eighteenth birthday and must have resided in foster care continuously for at least six months.
 - ii. Foster care is defined as 24-hour substitute care for a child who is placed away from the child's parents or guardians and for

whom the department has placement and care responsibility through either court order pursuant to a dependent, neglect and/or abuse petition or voluntary placement agreement.

- iii. A placement may meet the definition of foster care regardless of whether the placement is licensed and the Department is providing foster care payments for the child's care.
- iv. Foster care includes placement in foster homes, pre-adoptive homes, group homes and residential treatment facilities.
- v. Foster care does not include placement in a training school or any other facility operated primarily for the detention of children who are determined to be wayward or delinquent.

2. Responsibility - A youth must:

- a. Voluntarily elect to receive after care services.
- b. Actively take part in developing and participating in a transition to independence plan.
- c. Either be seeking employment or be employed or attend an educational or vocational program. This requirement may be temporarily waived if the youth is doing volunteer work while awaiting enrollment in school or actively pursuing employment. If the youth is employed, the youth shall contribute toward the costs of services on a sliding scale basis.
- d. Indicate recognition and acceptance of personal responsibility in the transition toward independence.

3. Services and Supports - The aftercare program may provide the following services and supports to eligible youth:

- a. Individual self-sufficiency plan - Each youth shall have an individual self-sufficiency plan based on an assessment of the youth's strengths and needs. The plan shall identify:
 - i. The youth's goals for achieving self-sufficiency.
 - ii. The target date for reaching the goals.
 - iii. The tasks, responsible parties, time frames, and desired outcomes needed to reach the goals.
- b. Life skills services to enable youth to maintain a safe, healthy, and stable home.
- c. Health, Education and Employment Supports
 - i. Enrollment in Medicaid or assistance in obtaining and retaining health insurance through other means.
 - ii. Access to the DCYF Higher Education Tuition Assistance Grant and Chafee Educational Vouchers
 - iii. Eligibility to apply for Teen Grants.
 - iv. Assistance with obtaining and retaining employment.
- d. Follow-up - The program shall maintain individual contact with the youth at a frequency as defined in the youth's self-sufficiency plan to ensure that the youth is meeting the goals of the plan.
- e. Ongoing assessment - Ongoing assessment activities shall be directed toward:

- i. Monitoring the progress being made in the youth's ability to achieve self-sufficiency.
 - ii. Coordination and evaluation of the services and supports being provided to reach the self sufficiency goal.
 - f. Management Support activities shall include, but not be limited to:
 - i. Community involvement services to enable the youth to access community resources.
 - ii. Development of support systems, including services to assist the youth in establishing or reestablishing relationships with significant adults.
- 4. Termination
 - a. Aftercare services and supports shall be terminated when any of the following conditions apply:
 - i. The youth has achieved the goals of the self-sufficiency plan or has failed to follow self-sufficiency plan components and expectations as determined by the program administrator.
 - ii. The youth voluntarily withdraws from aftercare services.
 - iii. The youth is no longer a resident of Rhode Island.
 - iv. The youth reaches 21 years of age.
 - v. There are insufficient funds to continue the services.
 - b. A youth who voluntarily withdraws from the program may opt to re-enter the program within six months of his or her withdrawal from the program.
- 5. Waiting list - The Department shall create a waiting list when all funds appropriated to provide services to youth under the State Managed Health Care program transfer as referenced within RIGL 42-72-5 (d) and funds appropriated in the quarterly allotments for the aftercare services program as referenced in RIGL 42-72-5 (e) are committed during the fiscal year. Names shall be entered on the waiting list on a first-come, first-served basis once the youth is determined eligible.
- 6. Appeals - Any individual who is determined to be ineligible for aftercare services or is dissatisfied with the components of the self-sufficiency plan under this section shall be entitled to file an administrative appeal with the Department in accordance with DCYF Policy 100.0055, Complaints and Hearings.