



TEXAS

**Department of Family
and Protective Services**

Extended Foster Care Resource Guide

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Resource Guides

The purpose of Resource Guides is to provide information that helps you do your job better. This information includes reference material, procedures, and guidelines that help you complete the tasks you are required to do by policy.

It's important to remember that the information in Resource Guides *does not substitute for policy*. We may sometimes include policy statements, but only to show you the policy to which the information is related. We will highlight any policy that actually appears in the Resource Guide and will almost always include a link to the actual policy. For example:

Per 4222.2 Re-Allowing Placement:

If the caseworker learns of a detailed justification for changing the status of and considering placements in a foster family that is on Disallowed Placement status, the caseworker must elevate this consideration through the regional chain of command to the regional director.

The policy in the handbook always takes precedence over what is in the Resource Guide. We try to keep policy and Resource Guides synchronized, but sometimes there is a delay. **If you have questions, always follow the policy in the Policy Handbook.**

Resource Guides provide important information on a range of topics, for the purpose of assisting and guiding staff to:

- make essential decisions
- develop strategies to address various issues
- perform essential procedures
- understand important processes
- identify and apply best practices

The information in the Resource Guides is not policy (except where noted), and the actions and approaches described here are not mandates. You should adapt the way you perform critical tasks to the individual needs and circumstances of the children and families with whom you work.

State office and field staff are working together to identify Resource Guide topics, define the content, and develop the appropriate guides. CPS will regularly post Resource Guides as they are developed and update them as needed. Check the Resource Guides page, in the CPS Handbook, to see new or revised Guides.

We hope these Guides provide useful information to guide and assist CPS staff in effectively performing their job tasks. These Guides, combined with clear and concise policy in the Handbook, should help staff provide a high level of service to children in Texas.

EXTENDED FOSTER CARE

See [10400](#) Extended Foster Care for Youth Who Are Age 18 or Older.

RATIONALE

DFPS managing conservatorship of a child ends on the date of the youth's 18th birthday, as the youth becomes an adult under Texas law.

Increase Preparedness

Some young adults may not be ready or may not choose to leave foster care at age 18. Other young adults have left care at 18 but have had problems and want to return to continue addressing goals for transitioning to a successful adulthood.

Participate in Voluntary Program

Young adults may choose to participate in Extended Foster Care if eligibility requirements are met. A young adult signs the [Voluntary Extended Foster Care Agreement](#) (VEFCA) to authorize DFPS to provide the young adult with this program. The Extended Foster Care placements include those listed in [10400](#) Extended Foster Care for Youth Who Are Age 18 or Older, and supervised independent living placements listed in [10460](#) Supervised Independent Living (SIL).

Respect Status as Young Adults

Many of the same processes and requirements exist for young adults who remain in foster care past their 18th birthday and for children under the age of 18. However, young adults in Extended Foster Care are adults with different needs and legal rights than younger children. Staff need to take this into account when providing support and services for these young adults.

Description of Rights and Responsibilities

For regular Extended Foster Care placements, see [Form 2541](#) Extended Care: Client Rights and Responsibilities.

PREPARING FOR AND TURNING 18

Within 90 Days of Turning 18

When a 17 year old youth in foster care chooses to stay for Extended Foster Care, follow the policy noted in [10411](#) Within 90 Days Before the Youth's 18th Birthday.

As Soon as Possible After the 18th Birthday

For youth staying for Extended Foster Care, follow the policy noted in [10412](#). As Soon as Possible After the 18th Birthday.

REDETERMINING FOSTER CARE ELIGIBILITY AT 18

See [10420](#) Qualifying for Extended Foster Care.

If a young adult decides to remain for Extended Foster Care, the caseworker completes the necessary paperwork (verification of the young adult's participation in an education or work-related activity and a Foster Care Review for Extended Foster Care eligibility) and submits it to the foster care eligibility specialist for approval. If it is not approved, the young adult's foster care placement and the foster care eligibility ends on the last day of the month of the young adult's 18th birthday.

Acceptable Documentation

Caseworkers provide annual verification to the eligibility specialist, ensuring that the young adult meets at least one of the educational and work-related criteria for Extended Foster Care assistance. The caseworker indicates the qualifying criterion on the Extended Foster Care review form. The caseworker responds to the determination questions in the Extended Foster Care section of the *Foster Care Review* page in IMPACT and submits the review form to the eligibility specialist through IMPACT. The caseworker also submits documentation to the eligibility specialist to show proof of the young adult's eligibility.

As a requirement for Extended Foster Care eligibility, young adults must agree to maintain documentation of all education or employment related activities. Upon request by the caregiver or the caseworker, the young adult will provide verification of attendance, participation, or enrollment in the selected activity.

Acceptable methods or types of verification vary by Extended Foster Care eligibility criteria and are further described below.

Educational Services: High School, General Equivalency Diploma (GED) Programs, Vocational and Technical Schools, Colleges and Universities

Acceptable documentation includes the following:

- Current college transcript that includes the number of hours completed
- Proof of enrollment for the current semester that includes the number of hours enrolled
- Most recent high school report cards
- GED class schedules, testing schedules or final exam results

- Letters of acceptance to a college, vocational or technical school (with a start date), or other qualified program such as GED programs
- Certificates of completion in vocational or technical classes
- Completion of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) (considered equivalent to graduation from high school)
- Proof of online distance learning classes, including attendance and completion criteria
- An approved Educational Training Voucher (ETV) application, if necessary (available from ETV staff)
- Other applicable school related documentation

The young adult must provide the caseworker with documentation no later than 30 days after completion of a school semester, certification completion date, or other educational completion date.

Employment

Acceptable forms of documentation to establish that a young adult is working at least 80 hours per month may include the following:

- Copies of weekly or monthly check stubs or pay statements
- Phone verification from the employer, with prior approval from the young adult
- Letters from the employer
- Other documents showing proof of employment

Programs or Activities to Promote or Remove Barriers to Employment

Young adults in Extended Foster Care may participate in other programs or services that improve, enhance, or teach job related skills applicable to the workplace or careers. These types of programs and services include, but are not limited to:

- activities and classroom instruction on career awareness, exploration, and preparation such as those provided through the local workforce centers;
- internships, job shadowing, on-the-job training positions and volunteer projects;
- supported employment programs in which:
- the young adult is provided intensive support accessing and learning job duties; and
- ongoing supports are available to the young adult and employer to maintain the young adult in the job;
- apprenticeship programs;
- adult basic education classes;
- programs such as American YouthWorks, AmeriCorps, or other local young adult initiatives that improve workplace knowledge and skills; or
- other similar job training programs.

Positions for volunteer projects should be beneficial in obtaining essential workplace skills.

The young adult must participate in the activity for a minimum of 15 hours per week. Young adults not enrolled in at least 15 hours of programs or activities to promote or remove barriers to employment must participate in or attend another education or work-related activity.

To verify beginning and end dates for programs and activities that promote or remove barriers to employment, caseworkers may use documentation such as:

- written acknowledgement from the instructor or other staff that the young adult has satisfactorily completed a program (with dates included);
- classroom schedules;
- activity or project schedules provided by volunteer organizations or internship programs;
- pre- and post-testing schedules; or
- satisfactory completion of predetermined program timeframes.

Other acceptable verification for efforts to remove the barriers to employment may include but are not limited to:

- proof of registration in a Texas Workforce Commission program such as a summer youth employment program;
- proof of registration in Work in Texas or other job search systems;
- proof of attendance at job readiness, job search, career exploration classes, or other classes (verification of attendance should be provided by class instructors); or
- a letter from the program that includes a program description, attendance dates, and an activity curriculum.

For additional information on training and education opportunities for youth and young adults, see the Texas Workforce Commission's [Training & Education Opportunities for Students](#) website.

Inability to Perform Either Educational or Work-Related Activity Because of a Medical Condition

Acceptable documentation of eligibility criteria may include any of the following:

- A statement from one or more medical doctors documenting the young adult's medical condition, including the activities of daily living that the young adult is incapable of doing as a result of that medical condition;
- Determination of a disability from the Social Security Administration;
- Determination of intellectual disability, when applicable.

There must be sufficient documentation to verify the medical condition, and that the medical condition renders the young adult incapable of participating in any of the Extended Foster Care educational or work-related activities. The medical documentation must also indicate which daily living activities the medical condition prevents the young adult from performing. The medical condition may be a mental or physical condition or a combination, provided that it

renders the young adult incapable of performing any of the other eligible activities.

Young adults are required to resubmit documentation of a medical disability annually.

Monitoring Continued Participation

See [10423](#) Monitoring Continued Participation and Annual Eligibility Review.

The caseworker meets monthly with the youth to ensure that the young adult continues to meet the eligibility requirements. The caseworker documents related participation information in the contact section of the case record.

Also, young adults must immediately inform their caseworkers of any changes that would affect eligibility, such as losing a job, withdrawing from school, or completing a program.

Caseworkers ensure that the young adult completes the transition from one educational or work-related activity to another timely, as described in [10422](#) Transitioning Between Education or Work Related Activities.

TEMPORARY ABSENCES FROM EXTENDED FOSTER CARE

See [10424](#) Temporary Absences From Extended Foster Care.

Types of Temporary Absences

Examples of temporary absences may include:

- a short-term hospitalization;
- an arrest for a minor conviction that results in a short stay in a city or county jail facility. An arrest of a more serious nature, including a felony, may cause it to be inappropriate for the young adult to return to the same or other foster home setting. In these situations, the caseworker obtains approval from the program director (PD) for how to proceed;
- a family visit; or
- a vacation.

Scheduled Absences

A young adult must notify the caseworker and caregiver for absences that are known in advance, such as scheduled surgeries, planned family trips, or vacations. In other circumstances, the caseworker may need to re-evaluate the placement to ensure that the placement is appropriate.

Reimbursement to Reserve Space for Return of Young Adult

To reserve space for the young adult's anticipated return to the same placement at a date in the near future, DFPS may reimburse the DFPS-paid placement for up to 14 days in the following circumstances: See [4270](#) Temporary Absence from Paid Placement.

- Hospitalization in a psychiatric facility
- Hospitalization in a medical facility
- Unauthorized placement
- Temporary placement or visit in the young adult's own home
- Planned vacation
- Placement in a locked facility such as jail
- Placement for short-term substance abuse treatment

Criteria for Payment During the Absence of the Young Adult

The DFPS-paid placement continues to receive payment during a young adult's temporary absence only if each of the following conditions is met:

- The foster caregiver plans to have the young adult return to the same placement at the end of the absence
- The foster caregiver agrees to reserve a space in the placement until the young adult's return for as long as payments are made during the young adult's absence
- DFPS is not making payments on behalf of this same young adult to any other provider during the young adult's absence

Requirements of the Foster Caregiver including SIL Provider

The foster caregiver must be actively engaged in:

- providing active support to the young adult;
- meeting the young adult's concrete needs, such as providing clothing;
- having frequent face-to-face contact with the young adult on a regular basis, such as by being physically present with the young adult at the hospital as required by some medical facilities;
- facilitating family visits, as appropriate;
- communicating with the caseworker and State Office SIL Coordinator (if needed) about the young adult's progress or lack of progress, and discharge plan.

When Caregivers Are Not Eligible for Reimbursement

DFPS will not reimburse the foster caregiver or SIL Provider for days of care when a young adult resides in the following non-DFPS paid placements:

- Nursing home placement
- Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (ICF/IID)
- State supported living centers (SSLC)
- Relative caregiver who is not licensed
- Pre-consummated adoptive placement
- Texas Juvenile Justice Department facility
- Texas state hospitals

See [10510](#) Trial Independence for information about trial independence.

YOUNG ADULTS RECEIVING SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS

A young adult receiving Social Security Administration (SSA) benefits, such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Retirement, Survivors, Disability Insurance (RSDI), or other monthly benefits designated for the young adult's care and support, must also sign the [Voluntary Extended Foster Care Financial Agreement](#) ("Financial Agreement"), which is an attachment to the VEFCA. The young adult signs the VEFCA Financial Agreement on or after their 18th birthday, whereas the VEFCA can be signed before or after the young adult turns 18. The young adult's CPS caseworker sends a copy of the signed Financial Agreement to the foster care eligibility specialist, the regional SSI coordinator and the regional CPS Children's Income Accounting unit.

By signing the Financial Agreement, the young adult agrees to allow DFPS to use their monthly benefit for the cost of care while the young adult is in the Extended Foster Care program. The young adult further agrees to allow SSA or the issuing entity to name DFPS as the representative payee for the benefit. If SSA or the issuing entity names DFPS the payee, the monthly benefit is issued directly to DFPS.

When SSA or the issuing entity names the young adult to be their own payee, the monthly benefits are sent directly to the young adult. Each month the young adult turns over the benefit by signing the back of the check and sending it to the regional CPS Children's Income Accounting unit. The unit deposits the check into the regional children's income account. If the young adult refuses to turn over the monthly benefit, DFPS terminates the young adult's foster care eligibility.

YOUNG ADULTS IN HHSC GUARDIANSHIP IN DFPS FOSTER CARE PLACEMENTS

If the Probate Court appoints HHSC as guardian of a young adult on or after the 18th birthday, please following 5650 Referral to HHSC Guardianship.

Once HHSC is appointed as guardian, the young adult is no longer considered to be in the DFPS Extended Foster Care program, even though the young adult remains in a foster care placement. Because of the continued oversight of the Probate Court, HHSC handles all case management and planning once an HHSC guardianship is in place. Court hearings will not take place in the family court following HHSC's appointment. Caseworker consults with foster care eligibility specialist regarding the young adult's foster care eligibility. The caseworker follows [5600](#) Extend Court's Jurisdiction When a Youth Turns 18 and ensures that DFPS promptly moves for dismissal of the family court's jurisdiction. See [10343.62](#) DFPS Foster Care Placement After HHSC Appointed as Guardian.

For additional information on young adults in HHSC Guardianship with SSA benefits see [1543.1](#) Youth Age 18 or Older in Voluntary Foster Care: Signing Over SSI and RSDI Benefits.

For additional information on HHSC becoming the Guardian for CPS young adults, see:

[10343.2](#) Criteria for HHSC Guardianship Referral

[HHSC Guardianship Provider Handbook](#)

YOUNG ADULT REFUSES TO SIGN VEFCA FINANCIAL AGREEMENT

If the young adult refuses to sign the VEFCA Financial Agreement, the caseworker explains to the young adult that the young adult is not eligible for foster care after the month of the young adult's 18th birthday. The young adult must understand that DFPS cannot pay for the cost of care when the young adult is keeping this income.

If the young adult refuses to sign the agreement, payment for the young adult's foster care placement is terminated. For young adults turning 18, termination is effective the first day of the next month after the young adult turns 18. If entering Extended Foster Care later, termination is effective the first day of the next month. In these cases, the young adult cannot remain in the foster home or in another foster care placement unless the provider is willing to keep the young adult at no cost to DFPS. The young adult is eligible for [Former Foster Care Children](#) (FFCC).

Medicaid is available if they receive Medicaid the before they age out of care. FFCC provides coverage to the young adult from age 18 up to age 26. If the young adult was not receiving Medicaid while in foster care, they may be able to qualify for Medicaid through Transitional Medicaid, which provides coverage up to age 21.

See [1544](#) Medicaid for Young Adults Who Age Out of Foster Care for additional procedures.

YOUNG ADULT WITH DEPENDENT CHILDREN

DFPS may pay the cost of care and provide Medicaid for the dependent children of young adults placed in the Extended Foster Care program, if the young adult resides in the same placement as their child. However, Medicaid is not provided for the dependent child when the young adult returns to care in situations discussed in [10520](#) Return for Extended Foster Care.

Young adults who have dependent children with them in care must be responsible for arranging for appropriate care and supervision of the children. This includes but is not limited to:

- child care, as appropriate;
- access to medical and dental appointments;
- access to community resources;
- enrollment and access to local schools, as appropriate.

Creating Case-Related Special Request (CRSR) Case/Stage for Children of Young Adults in SIL Placements

When a young adult has a child while in extended foster care, including SIL, see SWI policy handbook section 4483 Young Adults Who Return to Care. The caseworker notifies SWI to backdate the intake date to the date the child went to the placement with the young adult. When the intake is stage progressed, the system assigns a stage progression date that is the start of the *SUB C-PB* stage. The caseworker will need to call in a data correction to have the stage progression/*SUB* stage start date be the same as the date the child went to the placement with the young adult. The caseworker can then enter the placement start date for the date the child went into the placement. The caseworker assigns the foster care eligibility specialist as secondary worker on the *SUB C-PB* stage. The caseworker asks the eligibility specialist to see what the eligibility specialist needs to allow the foster care payments to start.

CASEWORK ACTIVITY FOR YOUNG ADULTS IN EXTENDED FOSTER CARE

Young adults in Extended Foster Care are legal adults. Caseworkers assist the young adult in Extended Foster Care to transition to a more independent and responsible adult role when addressing individual needs. Caseworkers should offer the young adult opportunities to learn appropriate and meaningful independent living skills. Caseworkers and providers should respect the status of young adults in Extended Foster Care and the need for a supportive

environment that allows them to practice, improve, and enhance their life skills, so that they can experience positive outcomes as they leave care.

Young adults in Extended Foster Care should have greater responsibility for activities, and should be empowered to manage their own activities. This includes:

- initiating caseworker contacts;
- identifying settings and topics for caseworker monthly contacts;
- participating in independent living activities; and
- participating in age appropriate activities.

While casework requirements (such as monthly caseworker contacts and service plans) are the same for the Extended Foster Care population as they are for those in foster care under age 18, the manner of accomplishing these requirements should allow for more input, flexibility and responsiveness to the young adult's requests.

See [10441](#) Casework Activity.

Monthly Face-to-Face Visits

See [10423](#) Monitoring Continued Participation and Annual Eligibility Review.

The caseworker may place more responsibility on the young adult to meet the caseworker for visits in a more age appropriate setting. Some young adults can "check in" and meet the caseworker at pre-arranged times instead of the caseworker making an appointment. The visits can take place at a restaurant, worker's office, a Transition Center, and so on. However, most of the visits must take place in the SIL setting. The only exception is a college dorm.

Young adults are responsible for reporting to the CPS caseworker when they apply for or receive other sources of funds from the Department such as the PAL transitional living allowance or PAL aftercare room and board. Failing to report this may affect the young adult's eligibility for Extended Foster Care assistance.

Service Plan for Young Adults 18 and Older

Young Adults participating in Extended Foster Care receive service planning in accordance with DFPS policy [6241.22](#) Review of Child's Plan of Service (CPOS).

The service plan should:

- address all sections for youth over the age of 14 in the CPOS ;)
- address how the young adult, foster caregiver or SIL Provider will meet identified needs, skills to be developed, or other supports;
- identify time frames to meet identified areas of need and development.

- reflect the agreement made between DFPS, the young adult, and caregiver (including SIL Provider) to obtain independent living skills;
- identify benchmarks that indicate how both the caseworker and the young adult know when independence can be achieved; and
- support the widest possible latitude for the young adult in participating in experiential life skills, both in and out of the placement setting.

For young adults receiving SIL Enhanced Case Management (ECM) services, the caseworker will receive, and include in the review of the CPOS:

- Written initial goals to be accomplished in the SIL by the 30th day of SIL placement;
- Updates and progress being made on the identified goals during review of the CPOS; and
- When ECM services are no longer necessary or to be discontinued due to the lack of progress.

Medical Consenter Issues and Documentation

See [10442](#) Medical Consenter Issues and Documentation.

A young adult is legally entitled to make their own medical decisions at age 18, unless HHSC or another individual or entity is appointed by a probate court as their legal guardian. However, the young adult may authorize a backup medical consenter to facilitate health care or access the young adult's Health Passport.

Facilitate means that the individual may talk to the young adult's health care providers, help the young adult set up health care appointments, help the young adult understand their health care needs, and so on. However, the young adult consents to all medical care. (Also see [11151](#) Young Adults Who Are 18 Years or Older.)

The young adult can only authorize one individual as backup medical consenter, except for married couples. If the young adult authorized two individuals who are not married to help facilitate their health care or access their Health Passport record, document the person most likely to assist the young adult with health care appointments.

Document a backup medical consenter on the IMPACT *Medical Consent* page, for a young adult aged 18 years or older who does not have a court-appointed guardian, only for the purpose of transmitting electronic information to STAR Health to allow the person to:

- access the young adult's Health Passport record; or
- discuss the young adult's Protected Health Information (PHI) with STAR Health.

A person documented as backup medical consenter in this situation does not have authority to consent to medical care for the young adult.

Young Adult with an Intellectual or Developmental Disability Missing from Extended Foster Care Placement

See:

[10450](#) If the Young Adult Goes Missing

[6460](#) When a Child or Youth is Missing from DFPS Conservatorship

Attempts to locate the young adult include contacting family members and other individuals the young adult knows.

If the young adult is a person with an Intellectual or Developmental Disability (IDD) and the caseworker believes the young adult has unwillingly or unknowingly left the authorized placement due to their IDD, or has been removed by an unauthorized person, the caseworker should contact local law enforcement. If the caseworker believes the young adult's health and safety may be in jeopardy, the caseworker, when making the report to law enforcement, should

request that the young adult be included in the Endangered Missing Persons Alert Network. The local law enforcement officials will work with the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) to decide if the situation meets Alert Network criteria and will activate the Network if appropriate.

Law enforcement may request medical documentation confirming a young adult's intellectual or developmental disability.

The Endangered Missing Persons Alert Network was developed as a statewide emergency response system for those missing persons with an intellectual disability. The term *intellectual disability* includes a pervasive developmental disorder. The Network is designed to be activated when the disappearance of a missing person with a diagnosed intellectual disability poses a credible threat to their health and safety.

ONGOING REVIEW OF ELIGIBILITY FOR EXTENDED FOSTER CARE

See [10423](#) Monitoring Continued Participation and Annual Eligibility Review.

Eligibility specialists perform an annual review every 12 months until the young adult is age 21, or 22 if the young adult is in high school or a GED program.

For most young adults in Extended Foster Care, the caseworker begins the review by completing a Foster Care review in IMPACT and submitting it to the foster care eligibility specialist. The caseworker also sends current documentation to the eligibility specialist verifying that the young adult is participating in an activity that qualifies for the Extended Foster Care program, or that the young adult is unable to do so due to a documented medical condition. The caseworker also sends the eligibility specialist copies of the court orders from court review hearings that may have been held for the young adult.

The eligibility specialist reviews the information provided on the IMPACT *Foster Care Assistance Review* form and the submitted documentation that shows which Extended Foster Care eligibility criteria the young adult currently meets.

If the young adult's activity for eligibility has changed since the last review, the caseworker submits documentation to the eligibility specialist showing which educational, work, or medical eligibility criteria the young adult meets at the time of submission and selects the appropriate category on the Foster Care Review Form. The young adult does not have to sign a new [Form 2540](#) Voluntary Extended Foster Care Agreement (VEFCA).

The caseworker does not have to submit a new Foster Care Assistance Review form if, during the year, the young adult switches from one activity to another. However, the caseworker is required to select the new activity and submit the current corresponding documentation to the eligibility specialist on the next annual review.

If the caseworker has obtained documentation that the young adult is meeting one or more of the eligibility criteria for Extended Foster Care, and receives this documentation within the 30-day period before the annual review, the caseworker does not have to obtain new documentation to submit to the eligibility specialist. The caseworker can, however, keep the documentation in the file.

RETURNING TO EXTENDED FOSTER CARE AFTER TRIAL INDEPENDENCE PERIOD ENDS

For a young adult returning to Extended Foster Care after the end of their trial independence period and whose case is maintained in a C-RC stage, the eligibility specialist cannot complete a Foster Care Review through IMPACT. The eligibility specialist is still required to review the young adult's eligibility annually to verify that the young adult is participating in an activity that qualifies for the Extended Foster Care program.

To renew the young adult's eligibility, the eligibility specialist:

- asks the caseworker to submit documentation verifying the young adult's participation in an eligible activity at [10421](#) Eligibility for Extended Foster Care;
- records a new eligibility event to reflect the dates of the young adult's continued eligibility and the subsequent annual review; and
- enters in the comments field that the young adult continued to meet the applicable eligibility requirements at [10421](#) Eligibility for Extended Foster Care.

SUPERVISED INDEPENDENT LIVING (SIL)

See [10460](#) Supervised Independent Living (SIL)

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF YOUNG ADULTS WHILE IN A SIL SETTING

As participants in the SIL program, young adults have the right to:

- plan and manage their own work, school, social, and personal schedule, including accessing community resources to meet personal needs;
 - manage their own finances, including funds received from the SIL provider, and open their own bank accounts;
 - choose to participate in activities offered by the provider;
 - provide input into how the program can help young adults become more independent and self-sufficient;
 - receive assistance with meeting their CPOS goals; and
 - withdraw from SIL or request an SIL placement change (with good cause).
- A participant in the SIL program has the responsibility to:

- comply with the conditions and requirements of the Extended Foster Care program;
- communicate with the CPS caseworker at least monthly; and
- comply with the provider's program rules and regulations.

TYPES OF SIL SETTINGS

Supervised Independent Living (SIL) settings include the following:

Apartment setting: A room or suite of rooms with kitchen facilities that is designed as a residence and generally located in a building occupied by more than one household. An apartment may or may not provide on-site management.

Shared housing setting: A home in which people live cooperatively as an unrelated family. Shared housing may provide individual or shared bedrooms with limits placed on the number of persons sharing a bedroom. Shared housing is rented or owned by a provider and may be similar to an apartment. It is not located on the campus of a general residential operation (GRO). Shared housing may provide onsite management.

Non-college dorm setting: A building containing a number of private or semi-private bedrooms for housing persons who are either employed or are in school and commute to these and other personal and social activities. The setting is similar to a college dorm without the relationship to an institution of higher learning. A non-college dorm may provide on-site management. Example: a general residential operation (GRO) using a housing unit on the GRO property.

College dorm setting: A building provided by a college or university containing a number of private or semi-private bedrooms for housing persons who are in school and commute to the school and other personal and social activities. A college dorm may be located on or off campus. College dorms include college cooperatives (co-op) and may provide on-site management.

Host home setting: A rented room or garage apartment in a family's home, with access provided to a kitchen and, preferably, laundry facilities in the home. The young adult agrees to the household rules, but may come and go as needed for employment, school, and other personal or social activities.

REFERRAL, ASSESMENT, AND APPROVAL PROCESS FOR SIL PLACEMENTS

See [10463](#) Referral, Assessment, and Approval Process for the Supervised Independent Living (SIL) Program. For youth placed with the SSCC from a CBC catchment, follow process in the CBC Joint Operations manual (link to CBC webpage).

Referral for SIL Placements

Referrals for supervised independent living (SIL) placements may come from:

- The caseworker or supervisor;
- PAL staff (return to care only).

Who is eligible to be referred to the SIL program:

- youth in foster care about to turn 18 within 45 days;
- young adults in traditional Extended Foster Care settings;
- young adults returning during a trial independence period;
- young adults returning after a trial independence period has ended but before turning 21.

While the SIL referral, assessment, and approval process can proceed for an eligible youth who will be 18 by the desired SIL placement start date, only the term young adult is used for the applicant in reference to the SIL program. The youth must be 18 before a SIL placement can be made.

Prescreening for SIL Placement

The caseworker must thoroughly screen and assess applicants for a supervised independent living (SIL) setting prior to submission of the application. The state office SIL Coordinator must approve the referral to a DFPS SIL provider. For referrals for young adults from CBC catchment areas, please refer to the CBC Joint Operations Manual. (link to CBC webpage)

Factors to consider when prescreening a youth or young adult for SIL placement include:

- age (must be age 18 or older on the desired placement start date);
- level of maturity;
- supervision needs (SIL does not provide daily and/or 24-hour supervision);
- recent level of achievement in meeting personal and professional goals;
- current behavior; and
- eligibility for the Extended Foster Care program.

SIL Application and Assessment

Once a young adult has been prescreened and determined appropriate to apply for a supervised independent living (SIL) placement, the caseworker:

- contacts the young adult's Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) caseworker to determine what transitional living services the young adult is receiving or has completed, including:
- participation in PAL life skills training classes (see [10222](#) Life Skills Training);
- enrollment in the Education and Training Voucher (ETV) program or receipt of PAL case management services (not required). See [10320](#) Overview of the Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program;
- completes the SIL Application ([Form 2605](#)) with the young adult. If the SIL application is for enhanced case management services, the caseworker will complete this section and attach the required documents and review the application for:
 - completion and legibility;
 - appropriateness of the young adult's responses, considering the young adult's history;
 - the young adult's personal strengths and accomplishments;
 - discussion of progress and accomplishments in developing self-sufficiency and independence during the last 6 to 12 months while in conservatorship, traditional Extended Foster Care, or a trial independence period;
- assesses the young adult for:
 - readiness for placement in a less supervised setting;
 - ability to become self-sufficient;
 - any examples of independent activities and handling situations with minimal supervision;
 - status of meeting goals as outlined in the Child's Plan of Service;
 - ability to develop and meet both short- and long-term goals; and
 - types of SIL settings that would best meet the young adult's placement needs. For additional factors to consider refer to [Form 2605](#).

The caseworker discusses recommendations with the supervisor, obtains supervisory approval, and submits the request to the State office SIL Coordinator at SIL@dfps.sate.tx.us. For youth from a CBC catchment, follow process in the CBC Joint Operations manual (link to CBC webpage).

Referral to the State office SIL Coordinator

With supervisory approval, the caseworker forwards the below 3 documents to the SIL mailbox for review and consideration:

- [Form 2605](#) Supervised Independent Living Application.
- [Form 2087ex](#) Alternative Application for Placement of Children in Residential Care;
- [Form 2540](#) Voluntary Extended Foster Care Agreement

This includes applications for possible placement in the CBC Catchment areas.

- **For Enhanced Case Management also attach the following:**
 - Most Recent Psychological or Psychiatric Evaluation and;
 - Most Recent Service Level

The State office SIL Coordinator will review the application within 3 business days before contacting the caseworker to:

- determine whether the young adult is appropriate for placement in an SIL setting;
- return incomplete application (including required documents); or
- request additional information from the caseworker or the young adult.

After approving the SIL application, the State office SIL Coordinator sends the caseworker the Referral to SIL provider and approval Form 2529, instructions for next steps, and a link to DFPS SIL providers.

It is the caseworker's responsibility to contact the possible SIL Provider.

Within seven business days of receiving the SIL application approved by state office, the caseworker:

- reviews the list of SIL settings with the young adult; and
- decides which DFPS SIL provider, location, and setting best meets the young adult's needs;

If the young adult wants to proceed once selections are made; the young adult signs [Form 2606](#), a release authorizing the caseworker to contact the provider and send the referral packet. The young adult has the option to visit and tour the SIL settings before placement (if time and travel permit.).

- Refusing to sign the release will prevent a referral to an SIL provider.

Referral to and Approval by a DFPS SIL Provider

After the state office SIL Coordinator approves the referral and the young adult completes Form 2606, the caseworker makes the initial contact with the selected DFPS SIL Providers to discuss placement options and next steps. For young adults from a CBC catchment area follow process in the CBC Joint Operations manual.

The caseworker submits the approved SIL referral packet and other requested documentation to the SIL provider. The referral packet will include but is not limited to:

- The approved SIL application [Form 2605](#);
- The most current [Form 2087ex](#);
- The most current [Form 2540](#) Voluntary Extended Foster Care Agreement; and
- The referral to SIL provider Form 2529 (this form will be sent to you by the state office SIL coordinator after the application is approved);

For Enhanced Case Management also attach the following:

- Most Recent Psychological or Psychiatric Evaluation; and
- Most Recent Service Level.

The SIL provider reviews the required documentation and any other requested information and makes an initial determination whether to accept the referral for the requested SIL settings. As part of the determination, the SIL provider may speak with the young adult and may require a face-to-face meeting.

The SIL provider informs the state office SIL Coordinator whether the referral has been accepted by completing and sending the 2529 to the caseworker and cc'ing the SIL mailbox. If the caseworker receives the 2529 back without a cc to the SIL mailbox, forward the email to the mailbox.

If the application is accepted, the SIL provider, young adult, and the caseworker confer to:

- finalize the SIL location and setting;
- review the young adult's expectations and goals for the SIL placement;
- review the SIL provider's expectations of the young adult and the written agreement with the young adult;
- address any questions the young adult may have; and
- identify any additional placement information that may be needed by the SIL provider.

This discussion may involve a face-to-face meeting and visit to the SIL setting, if this was not done as part of the application and referral process.

The young adult, SIL provider, and caseworker must all agree to proceed with the placement. If all are in agreement, they establish placement plans. The young adult then reviews and signs the written agreement developed by the SIL provider.

For College-based SIL, the caseworker submits the following documents after state office approval:

- The approved SIL application ([Form 2605](#)); and

The referral to SIL provider [Form 2529](#) (this form will be sent to you by the state office SIL coordinator after the application is approved).

(Young adult must be accepted to the college or university prior to submitting the documents)

Young Adult Not Accepted Into the SIL Program or an SIL Placement

Not all young adults qualify for the supervised independent living (SIL) program or placement as determined either by DFPS or by the SIL provider. Reasons for non-acceptance may include but are not limited to:

- the SIL provider is unable to meet the young adult's needs; or
- DFPS or the SIL provider determines that the young adult would not be appropriate for an SIL setting at the current time.

DFPS Denies a Young Adult's Request to Apply for the SIL Program

If the caseworker or supervisor determines the young adult is not appropriate for supervised independent living (SIL) at the time the young adult requests to apply, the caseworker and young adult identify and discuss areas of concern, goals to be addressed, and steps to take to prepare the young adult to apply in the future.

If the state office SIL Coordinator does not approve the application, the SIL coordinator notifies the caseworker and identifies the reasons why the application was not accepted.

The caseworker reviews the reasons for the denial with the young adult. Together, they discuss why the application was not accepted and what needs to be addressed.

Note: Applications that are incomplete, have insufficient information, or outdated forms will not be reviewed or kept by the State Office SIL Coordinator.

Review of SIL Determination

If the State Office SIL coordinator determines that the young adult is not appropriate for placement in an SIL setting and denies the application, the caseworker reviews the non-acceptance with the supervisor and program director. If the decision is to proceed with the appeal, the caseworker contacts the State Office SIL Coordinator to request a SIL Determination Review.

The review consists of a conference call with the young adult, the caseworker, supervisor, and program director. If the matter cannot be resolved, the CPS Director of Transition Living Services makes the final determination.

SIL Provider Denies a Young Adult's Application

If the DFPS SIL provider denies the young adult's application after the initial approval by the State Office SIL Coordinator has been received, the DFPS SIL provider indicates the denial and reasons on [Form 2529](#) and sends the form to the DFPS caseworker. The caseworker sends a copy of Form 2529 to the State Office SIL Coordinator within five business days of denying the young adult's application, with the reasons for the denial described in the letter. If the SIL Coordinator disagrees with the denial, the State Office SIL Coordinator reviews the issue with the SIL contract manager.

The caseworker contacts the young adult, reviews the denial, and discusses:

- the reasons for the denied application; and
- any steps or actions needed to have the DFPS SIL provider accept the SIL application.

The young adult may request placement with a different SIL provider if the SIL provider did not accept the young adult's SIL application based on factors such as:

- inability to meet the young adult's transportation needs related to employment;
- lack of education resources or other needed community services; or
- no upcoming or known vacancies.

The caseworker contacts the newly selected SIL provider and follows procedures discussed in this Guide.

If the caseworker has not secured an SIL placement within 90 days, the caseworker must submit a new application to the SIL mailbox.

Reapplication After SIL Application Is Denied

If the young adult requires additional readiness activities for the supervised independent living (SIL) placement, the young adult and caseworker, with supporting documentation, may reapply every 60 days with an updated SIL application. The application must address the issues identified, and the steps or actions needed to obtain an SIL placement.

INITIAL PLACEMENT PROCESS

See [10463.1](#) Initial Placement Process.

Once the young adult is accepted by a supervised independent living (SIL) provider, the caseworker completes all placement paperwork for the SIL provider, which includes the following documents:

- Placement Authorization - SIL [Placement Authorization 2085SIL](#)
- Placement Summary Form ([Form 2279](#))
- CPS Extended Foster Care Rights and Responsibilities [CPS Extended Foster Care Rights and Responsibilities](#)
- The caseworker verifies that the young adult has:
 - a current copy of the Child's Plan of Service (CPOS);
 - personal documents such as:
 - a birth certificate;
 - Texas Identification card or driver's license;
 - Medicaid card;
 - Health Passport information; and
 - The original or a certified copy of their Social Security card; and

- Education Portfolio if the young adult is still attending HS.

IMPACT Process

The caseworker refers to the [SIL IMPACT Job Aid](#) when entering and closing a young adult's SIL placement.

Notifications

Following the initial SIL placement, the caseworker encourages the young adult to notify family members, other caring adults and involved advocates about the SIL placement and provides contact information.

For placement process into a SIL program for young adults from CBC catchment area, please refer to the CBC Joint Operations Manual. [Community Based Care](#) Documentation of Young Adults with Dependent Children.

The Subcare Case-Related Special Request – Public Service (*SUB C-PB*) stages are used to record information about dependent children of young adults in SIL placements, as with other Extended Foster Care placements. See [Young Adult with Dependent Children](#) in this Resource Guide for details.

SUBSEQUENT PLACEMENT PROCESS WITH SAME DFPS SIL PROVIDER

See [10463.2](#) Subsequent Placement Process With the Same DFPS SIL Provider.

A young adult must contact their caseworker to request a move to a different supervised independent living (SIL) setting with the same DFPS SIL provider. There must be a valid reason for a move, such as:

- a change in employment or education locations;
- a need for a larger setting to accommodate a young adult with one or more children; or
- a desire for a different type of SIL setting (move from a non-college dorm to an apartment).

If the caseworker, SIL provider, and State Office SIL Coordinator support the young adult's decision to move to a different SIL setting with the SIL provider, the young adult then selects an SIL setting from the available options and obtains approval from the SIL provider, caseworker, and State Office SIL Coordinator. Once approval is obtained, the young adult, SIL provider, and caseworker make arrangements for the transition. After the move has taken place, the caseworker updates the new placement information in IMPACT as appropriate.

If the move within the same SIL program involves the young adult requiring enhanced case management services, request must be sent to the DFPS Supervised Independent Living mailbox SIL@dfps.state.tx.us for review and approval.

ONGOING CASEWORKER DUTIES DURING SIL PLACEMENT

Casework activity for a SIL placement is the same as for all Extended Foster Care placements. See:

[10441](#) Casework Activity

[Casework Activity for Young Adults in Extended Foster Care](#) in this Resource Guide

DISCHARGES FROM THE SIL PROGRAM

See [10465](#) Discharge From the SIL Program.

A young adult may be discharged from SIL when the young adult:

- requests a change in SIL providers;
- completes SIL and Extended Foster Care goals and is ready to leave care for trial independence;
- refuses, or is unable to comply with, eligibility to be in Extended Foster Care and leaves for trial independence;
- refuses to comply with the SIL provider rules and regulations;
- unable to adjust and maintain in the SIL setting offering enhanced case management services;
- ends eligibility for Extended Foster Care; or
- demonstrates a need to be in a traditional Extended Foster Care placement that has more supervision, because of issues such as maturity, behaviors, and safety.

All SIL discharges must be planned, with sufficient time to prepare for the SIL discharge. Unplanned discharges are considered to be emergency SIL discharges. The SIL provider and caseworker take all reasonable steps to prevent emergency discharges from the SIL setting.

Planned SIL Discharge

The young adult must provide written notice to DFPS and the DFPS supervised independent living (SIL) provider at least 30 days before the young adult's requested discharge date, if:

- the young adult determines that their SIL or Extended Foster Care goals have been achieved;
- the SIL setting is no longer in the young adult's best interest; or
- the SIL setting is not meeting the young adult's needs.

The SIL provider must provide written notice to the young adult and DFPS 30 days before the discharge date, if the SIL provider determines that:

- the young adult has achieved their SIL or Extended Foster Care goals;
- the SIL setting is no longer in the young adult's best interest; or
- the SIL setting is not meeting the young adult's needs.

DFPS is required to provide written notice to the young adult and SIL provider at least 30 days before the discharge date, if DFPS determines that the SIL setting:

- is no longer in the young adult's best interest; or
- is not meeting the young adult's needs.

The DFPS SIL provider, caseworker, and the young adult work together to ensure, as much as possible, a seamless transition to the young adult's new SIL provider placement, traditional Extended Foster Care placement, or a trial independence arrangement.

Change of DFPS SIL Providers

A caseworker or young adult may request in writing a change of DFPS supervised independent living (SIL) providers for reasons such as:

- the current SIL setting type is not meeting the needs of the young adult;
- the young adult is moving to a different location or area; or
- the young adult desires a type of SIL setting that the current SIL provider does not provide.

Upon receiving the written request, the caseworker updates the 2087ex and, along with the young adult, updates the SIL Application ([Form 2605](#)). Next, the caseworker will submit the updated documents to the SIL mailbox for review and approval. [Once approved, the caseworker will submit the documents along with a new 2529 to the new provider.](#)

The caseworker informs the SIL provider about the efforts to find a new SIL provider.

A change of SIL providers is a discharge from the current SIL provider.

Upon the SIL application being approved and a SIL placement has being located, the caseworker coordinates the development of the discharge and placement date with the relevant parties and finalizes plans for the transition. The caseworker ensures the change in SIL providers is a smooth transition for the young adult.

The current SIL provider must have at least a 30-day notice of a planned discharge date. The caseworker notifies the State Office SIL Coordinator of the discharge and placement date.

Young adults should not expect an immediate or an emergency placement from one SIL provider to another SIL provider. If an emergency discharge must take place, refer to [Emergency Discharge From SIL Program](#) in this Resource Guide.

Discharge from the SIL Program to a Traditional Extended Foster Care Setting

A young adult may be discharged from the supervised independent living (SIL) program to a traditional Extended Foster Care setting for various reasons, such as more structure or readiness activities, the proximity to work or school, or behavioral or safety concerns.

If a planned discharge from the SIL program to a traditional Extended Foster Care placement is in the best interest of the young adult, the caseworker notifies the DFPS SIL provider within three business days of this decision. The caseworker follows procedures for requesting a foster care placement and involves the young adult as much as possible in the process of obtaining the placement. See [4000](#) Placing Children in DFPS Conservatorship.

Once a traditional Extended Foster Care placement has been identified, the caseworker, SIL provider, and young adult agree on the placement change date and begin preparation for the young adult's transition back into a traditional foster care setting. The plan for ending the SIL placement includes receiving personal items, personal documents, and receiving other information as appropriate.

For additional information about Extended Foster Care, see [10400](#) Extended Foster Care for Youth Who Are Age 18 or Older.

Child's Plan of Service Review for Discharge from SIL and Extended Foster Care to Trial Independence or Independence

Within 90 days before the young adult's planned date of discharge from the supervised independent living (SIL) placement and Extended Foster Care, the caseworker schedules a Child's Plan of Service (CPOS) review with the young adult and DFPS SIL provider.

The CPOS review includes topics such as:

- housing and living arrangements;
- transportation;
- budgeting and money management;
- employment;
- contact information for Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) staff;
- contact information for transition centers;
- caring adults contacts;
- aftercare support;
- review of PAL or other Transitional Living Services benefits;
- plans while on a Trial Independence period (if appropriate); and
- current information about Star Health or STAR member healthcare plan.

The caseworker ensures that the young adult has all personal records and documents such as:

- a birth certificate;
- a Social Security card;
- a Texas identification card;
- savings account information;
- a Medicaid card;
- education records and Transition Portfolios; and

- printed medical records from Health Passport.

Trial Independence begins when the young adult leaves the SIL program and is not continuing in Extended Foster Care. For additional information on discharge, see [10470](#) Discharge From Extended Foster Care. For information regarding trial independence refer to [10510](#) Trial Independence.

Emergency Discharge from the SIL Program

If an emergency supervised independent living (SIL) discharge is due to occur or has occurred, the DFPS SIL provider must notify DFPS immediately if possible, but no later than 24 hours after the provider becomes aware of the unplanned discharge.

If the caseworker initiates an emergency discharge because of immediate concerns over the young adult's health and safety, medical, or legal issues, the CPS caseworker notifies the SIL provider within 24 hours of the discharge and provides the reasons for the young adult's emergency discharge.

After receiving notification of a young adult's emergency discharge, the caseworker attempts to make contact within 24 hours with the young adult to discuss the emergency discharge, resolves whether the young adult can move to a traditional Extended Foster Care Setting or will be starting trial independence (or independence, if 21 years of age), and makes arrangements as appropriate to ensure the young adult has all personal belongings and has at least a short-term plan for themselves.

Unplanned SIL discharges result in a move to a:

- Traditional Extended Foster Care setting (most likely a shelter situation). For additional information see [10400](#) Extended Foster Care for Youth Who Are Age 18 or Older or [4000](#) Placing Children in DFPS Conservatorship; or
- Trial independence setting (if under age 21). For additional information about trial independence, see [10500](#) Trial Independence and Return for Extended Foster Care.

Emergency Discharge from the SIL Program to Trial Independence

See [10472](#) Emergency Discharge From Extended Foster Care.

By agreement of the caseworker, the supervisor, and the DFPS SIL provider, the supervised independent living (SIL) setting remains open for 14 days after DFPS receives notification of the unplanned discharge to:

- allow the caseworker and the young adult to discuss the discharge; and
- ensure that the young adult is secure and certain of their decision to leave Extended Foster Care.

If the young adult does not return to the SIL setting within 14 days, the placement is closed in IMPACT. The caseworker notifies the State Office SIL Coordinator about the discharge.

For information about trial independence, see [10500](#) Trial Independence and Return for Extended Foster Care.

Additional Discharge Actions

The caseworker notifies the State Office SIL Coordinator whenever a young adult is discharged from an SIL provider, to ensure that an accurate vacancy record is maintained.

DISCHARGE FROM EXTENDED FOSTER CARE

See [10470](#). Discharge From Extended Foster Care.

All discharges are expected to be planned. The foster caregiver and caseworker take all reasonable steps to prevent an unplanned discharge. For steps that can be taken, see [Actions to Prevent an Unplanned Discharge](#) in this Resource Guide.

Planned Discharges from Extended Foster Care

Within 90 days before the young adult's planned date of discharge, the caseworker schedules a review of the CPOS with the young adult and foster caregiver. This meeting must be documented in IMPACT under Permanency Planning Meetings as either a Circle of Support or a Permanency Conference.

The CPOS review includes topics such as:

- housing and living arrangements;
- transportation;
- budgeting and money management;
- employment;
- contact information for PAL staff;
- caring adults contacts;
- after-care support;
- review of PAL or other Transitional Living Services benefits;
- plans while on a trial independence period (if appropriate);
- Star Health medical records.

The caseworker ensures that the young adult has all personal records and documents such as:

- a birth certificate;
- a Social Security card;
- a Texas identification card;
- savings account information;
- a Medicaid card;

- education records and Transition Portfolios;
- printed medical records from Health Passport.

Staff follow all policies related to transitioning from care, as though the young adult was going to leave care at age 18, such as the following policies and sub items:

[6252](#) Permanency Planning Meetings for Youth 14 and Over

[64542](#) Personal Documents Provided to Youth

[10130](#) Transition Centers for Youth

[10140](#) Overview of Healthcare Coverage for Youth and Young Adults Who Age Out of Foster Care

[10510](#) Trial Independence

[56121](#) Actions Required by the Caseworker for All Youth Aging Out of DFPS Conservatorship, for addressing trial independence court jurisdiction issues.

Emergency Discharge from Extended Foster Care

See [10472](#) Emergency Discharge From Extended Foster Care.

If the discharge must take place, the caseworker uses actions to prevent the emergency discharge and make it a planned discharge if possible. If not, the caseworker finalizes plans for the emergency discharge; makes arrangements, as appropriate, to ensure the young adult has all personal belongings; and, discusses trial independence.

If a young adult must leave the current placement immediately, it may be appropriate to place the young adult in a shelter for two to four weeks before the trial independence period starts.

Actions to Prevent an Unplanned Discharge

Actions to prevent an unplanned discharge from Extended Foster Care for young adults may include:

- helping the young adult commit to short term goals and develop short term plans;
- reviewing options and consequences with the young adult;
- helping the young adult visualize what will happen as they leave care;
- holding a Circle of Support meeting to discuss the concerns and how these concerns may be alleviated (see [6252](#) Permanency Planning Meetings for Youth 14 and Older);
- finding an alternative Extended Foster Care placement. Consult with regional and state office placement staff in the regions and state office as needed;
- requesting a special staffing as needed with subject matter experts in the regions and state office; involve the regional field attorneys as appropriate.