

ADOLESCENT SERVICES

Administration

42-1

Policy

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) shall provide youth in care with the necessary services and supports to increase their competencies, self-reliance and self-sufficiency as they transition into independence. DCF shall provide a variety of services to eligible youth through the Adolescent Services program.

All youth in care aged 14 and older shall receive adolescent planning regardless of their permanency plan. This program shall include educational, vocational and employment services as well as an array of living settings that will allow youth to gradually assume more independence within a supportive atmosphere as they age and mature. Additionally, DCF shall offer supports and services that will allow youth to have age-appropriate normative experiences as well as assistance with developing a natural long-term support system.

DCF shall also work to achieve either legal or relational permanency for all adolescents in care. The permanency goal shall be a priority in all interactions between DCF youth and staff and contracted providers.

Adolescent Case Transfer Conference

An Adolescent Case Transfer Conference shall be held for every DCF youth age 14 or older, in out-of-home placement and committed as abused, neglected or uncared for, or dually committed, except when:

- the case is already assigned to an Adolescent Specialist;
- the youth is receiving Voluntary Services;
- there is an adoption pending; or
- the youth will be returning home within six months.

Related form: [DCF-2084, "Adolescent Case Transfer Conference."](#)

Adolescent Case Transfer Process

A LINK Children in Placement (CIP) data report shall be printed quarterly by the Adolescent Program Manager (APM) identifying Regional youth who are 14 years of age and older and are not subject to the above exceptions.

The Adolescent Program Manager shall work within his or her Regional Office's existing structure to provide a forum through which case transfer conferences shall be held.

The APM shall notify the Program Managers of the identified cases to be reviewed. The Adolescent Program Manager or designee shall chair the Adolescent Case Transfer Conference.

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Adolescent Case Transfer Process (continued)

If it is decided that the case should not be transferred to an Adolescent Specialist, this determination shall be reviewed in subsequent Administrative Case Reviews. The method by which the current Social Worker shall ensure that the adolescent will receive and be made aware of all the benefits the Adolescent Services Program has to offer shall be documented.

Cross reference: [DCF Policy 36-11 et seq., "Administrative Case Review."](#)

The Social Worker shall document in LINK:

- a narrative of the Adolescent Case Transfer Conference content and decision; and
- the rationale for not transferring the case to the Adolescent Specialist caseload.

In the case of a disagreement regarding transfer, the Adolescent Program Manager shall make the final transfer decision.

Adolescent Specialist

An Adolescent Specialist is a Social Worker who has successfully completed or is willing to complete the DCF Workforce Development Academy's Adolescent Certification Program and shall be responsible for providing services to youth age 14 and older who are committed abused, neglected or uncared, or dually committed.

DCF recognizes that the adolescent population is a distinctive group that has a unique set of needs that must be supported in order to achieve goals that will provide a foundation for a successful transition to adulthood. To that end, Adolescent Specialists shall be trained in the impact of trauma in early childhood and its impact on the adolescent. Adolescent Specialists shall possess a thorough understanding of adolescent brain development.

Adolescent Services Social Work Supervisor

DCF shall identify staff as Adolescent Services Social Work Supervisors who shall be responsible for providing supervision to Adolescent Specialists. Adolescent Services Social Work Supervisors shall ensure that the Adolescent Specialists are qualified and experienced Social Workers in accordance with policy, procedures and best practice, and that they receive appropriate training and support.

Adolescent Services Social Work Supervisors shall provide ongoing supervision and support, to Adolescent Social Workers and review case-related activity and planning with a special emphasis on the adolescent casework principles and techniques set forth by DCF policies, practices and procedures.

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Youth Advisory Boards

DCF shall establish a Youth Advisory Board in each Region comprised of youth in out-of-home care. The Youth Advisory Boards shall address DCF policies and procedures involving youth issues and the unique problems of youth transitioning from out-of-home care.

Each Region shall assign a staff member to serve as the Regional Office Youth Advisory Board Coordinator. This staff member shall work with his or her Regional Boards and be responsible for:

- recruiting and training Board candidates;
- developing content and a schedule for meetings;
- developing a yearly activity budget; and
- providing necessary staffing for Board activities and expenditures.

DCF shall also establish a Statewide Youth Advisory Board comprised of youth representing each Region who are in out-of-home care. This board shall meet with the Commissioner on a quarterly basis or as requested.

The Statewide Youth Advisory Board shall focus on presenting to the DCF administration commonly or frequently identified needs of youth in out-of-home care and advocating for systemic change. Additionally, this Board shall make its members available for statewide initiatives and requests made by the DCF administration.

The Statewide Youth Advisory Board shall have a Central Office staff member assigned to serve as the Statewide Youth Advisory Board Coordinator. The Coordinator shall be responsible for:

- recruitment and training of Statewide Board candidates;
- developing the content and schedule for quarterly meetings;
- developing, approving and monitoring Regional and Statewide Board budgets for activities and expenditures;
- staffing meetings;
- providing funding for transportation as needed;
- providing Boards with access to DCF technology as available; and
- allowing Boards to review and comment on policies that relate to committed DCF children and youth.

Legal reference: [Conn. Gen. Stat. §17a-10c.](#)

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Services Post-Majority - Administrative Requirements

Youth who are committed abused, neglected, uncared for, or dually committed, as of their 18th birthday shall have their current "family" case closed in LINK and re-opened as a "Services Post-Majority" case in order to continue receiving services.

Youth in Services Post-Majority (SPM) cases shall be eligible to receive continued support from DCF if one of the following criteria is met:

- youth is completing secondary education or a program leading to an equivalent credential;
- youth is enrolled in an institution which provides post-secondary or vocational education;
- youth is participating in a program or activity designed to promote or to remove barriers to employment.

The Adolescent Specialist shall ensure that the youth's SPM case contains the current Individual Case Plan and placement, payment, medical, educational, legal and other necessary information from the previous case record.

The Adolescent Specialist shall complete the [DCF-779 "Notice at Age of Majority and Agreement for Services Post Majority"](#); DCF-550 (system generated), and DCF-551 (system generated), and file the originals in the case record.

The Adolescent Specialist shall file in Superior Court for Juvenile Matters, on behalf of the youth, a permanency plan, including a best interests statement, within 120 days of opening the SPM, and every 12 months thereafter. Permanency plans shall address efforts being made to prepare the youth for his or her transition to adulthood.

DCF shall continue to hold Administrative Case Reviews every six months for as long as the youth is receiving services.

The Adolescent Specialist shall update LINK with the current educational, vocational or employment training program information, including dates of attendance. The education screen shall be updated when the youth achieves educational, vocational or employment benchmarks and as otherwise needed. At all times, the record shall reflect where the youth is in his or her educational process.

All youth in SPM cases shall have a placement in LINK. At all times, the record shall reflect where the youth is currently residing. The Adolescent Specialist shall ensure that the current address for the youth is consistent in LINK: Case, Person and Private Individual.

The Adolescent Specialist shall assist potentially eligible youth to apply for Social Security benefits prior to discharge from DCF care.

Referrals to adult services shall be made on an as needed basis as part of the discharge process.

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Adolescent Services Credit Reports

The Department of Children and Families shall provide a free consumer credit report to each youth in out-of-home placement who is 14 years of age or older, at least once each year until the youth is discharged from DCF care.

Note: State and federal law state that the credit report requirement applies to "foster children" age 14 and over. However, federal law defines "foster child" very broadly and includes almost any child who is in out-of-home placement. Therefore, this policy applies to all youth placed by DCF in out-of-home care including Voluntary Services and Juvenile Justice clients, as well as youth in congregate care facilities, hospitals, on-campus housing, and independent living arrangements.

Legal reference: [Conn. Gen. Stat. §17a-114b](#); [42 U.S.C. §475\(5\)\(I\)](#); "consumer report" is defined in [15 U.S.C. 1681 \(a\)](#).

Accessing Credit Reports

The DCF Office of Fiscal Services (OFS) shall act as a liaison to the three major credit reporting agencies (TransUnion, Experian and Equifax). A Fiscal Services representative shall secure the necessary credit reports and pass them on to the youth's assigned Adolescent Specialist or Juvenile Justice Social Worker, noting any anomalous credit activity.

If a youth under age 18 is not committed to DCF as abused, neglected or uncared for, the OFS shall request written consent from the child's legal guardian in order for the youth's credit to be checked.

Youth age 18 and over shall sign a consent for OFS staff to secure consumer credit reports or the assigned Adolescent Specialist may teach youth how to obtain the credit report for themselves by using the free online service "annualcreditreport.com."

At the end of each fiscal year quarter, the OFS shall obtain from LINK a list of DCF youth in out-of-home placement who are turning 14 years of age. Within 15 days after the youth's 14th birthday, the youth's name and other necessary information shall be submitted by OFS to the three major credit reporting agencies using procedures developed in conjunction with those agencies.

At the end of each fiscal year, the OFS staff shall obtain from LINK a list of all DCF foster youth who are age 14 and older and submit the names and other necessary information to the credit reporting agencies within one year of the date the last credit report was requested.

When a credit report is received from an agency, the assigned OFS staff shall review it for anomalous credit activity. The credit report shall then be sent to the youth's Social Worker with a note stating whether there are any issues that may require resolution.

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Review of Credit Reports

The Social Worker shall provide the credit report to the youth and help the youth interpret it. The Social Worker shall explain any problems and advise the youth about what will be done to resolve them. The conversation with the youth shall be documented in LINK.

The Social Worker shall send a copy of the credit report to the youth's attorney using the [DCF-777 "Credit Report Letter to Child's Attorney"](#), which requests that the attorney also review the report with the youth and assist with any problem.

At each Administrative Case Review, the youth's most recent credit report shall be reviewed and any activity related to addressing issues shall be discussed.

Resolving Credit Report Issues

The Social Worker shall work with the assigned OFS credit agency liaison, the youth's attorney, the youth's creditors and DCF legal staff, as necessary, to resolve all issues on the credit report including the expungement of fraudulent information.

The credit reporting agencies may require a copy of the youth's birth certificate and the court order of commitment before expunging information. The Social Worker shall obtain the birth certificate and court order for the OFS staff. If the birth certificate or court order is not provided to OFS staff in a timely manner, the OFS staff shall notify the Social Worker Supervisor and Program Manager. If the OFS staff still does not receive the requested information, the Area Office Director shall be notified. The credit reporting agency will provide written acknowledgement to the OFS staff of the request for expungement and the action taken.

Credit fraud or identify theft discovered shall be reported to OFS, which shall notify the Office of the Chief State's Attorney using the [DCF-778 "Credit Report Letter to State's Attorney"](#). The Social Worker shall promptly provide any additional information requested by the Chief State's Attorney for investigation and prosecution.

All documentation to and from the credit reporting agencies shall be copied by OFS staff to the Social Worker and filed in the case record.

All conversations and activity related to a youth's credit report shall be documented in LINK.
