

ADOLESCENT SERVICES

Adolescent and Young Adult Programs

42-3

Policy

The Department of Children and Families shall, within available appropriations, provide an array of services to the adolescents in its care and the young adults who have chosen to remain with DCF.

Life Skills Education and Training

DCF shall provide youth in the Adolescent Services Program with the tools necessary to achieve self-sufficiency by providing instruction in life skills training, which shall include skills in:

- daily living and social relationships;
- self-care;
- work and study;
- career planning;
- finances;
- communication; and
- reproductive health care counseling consistent with national guidelines.

Legal reference: [Conn. Gen. Stat. §17a-62a](#), [42 U.S.C. sec. 677](#).

Congregate Care

The Department of Children Families shall provide short-term treatment in congregate care settings when indicated. The treatment shall be strengths-based and developmentally-appropriate. The treatment shall also be gender-responsive and trauma-informed.

Transitional Living Programs (PASS, Maternity Homes and SWETP)

DCF shall provide a range of transitional living programs for youth in care who need to practice their independent living skills within a supportive instructional environment. Transitional living programs offer youth an opportunity to learn and practice independent living skills, attend school in the community and hold jobs while residing in a 24-hour supportive structured supervised setting.

To be eligible for a transitional living program, the youth shall be:

- in DCF out-of-home care;
- age 14 and over;
- prepared for involvement in a less-restrictive setting; and
- not yet ready for living independently in the community.

A youth shall be ineligible for a transitional living program if he or she:

- is married;
 - is on active duty with any of the armed forces of the United States;
 - is displaying actively psychotic, violent or assaultive behavior; or
 - has an active substance abuse problem that would interfere with the group process and interventions.
-

ADOLESCENT SERVICES

Adolescent and Young Adult Programs

42-3

Transitional Living Programs (PASS, Maternity Homes and SWETP) (continued)

Program staff shall develop, in conjunction with the youth and DCF, a service agreement that shall include roles, responsibilities, expectations, goals and time frames for the youth. Additionally, the service agreement shall include a statement regarding actions to be taken if the youth does not comply with the terms of the service agreement or program requirements.

The [DCF-779, "Notice at Age of Majority and Agreement for Services Post-Majority \(SPM\),"](#) shall be signed by all youth prior to the eighteenth birthday indicating the youth's desire to voluntarily continue to receive services after age 18.

Community Housing Assistance Program (CHAP)

DCF shall offer a Community Housing Assistance Program (CHAP) and provide financial assistance to youth who were committed uncared for, abused or neglected or dually committed as of their 18th birthday who demonstrate an interest in and ability to pursue post-secondary education or vocational training. DCF shall offer youth in care several living options coupled with support services to assist with their gradual move towards successful adult living. Housing options include but are not limited to:

- individual and shared apartments;
- boarding arrangements; and
- on-campus dormitories.

CHAP Eligibility and Program Requirements

To be eligible for admission to the Community Housing Assistance Program (CHAP), a youth shall:

- be committed abused, neglected, uncared for, or dually committed, upon the youth's 18th birthday;
- have obtained a high school diploma or a Graduate Equivalency Diploma (GED);
- have exhibited adequate social, behavioral and life skills as determined by the Adolescent Specialist's assessment and documentation in the case record;
- have signed a [DCF-779, "Notice at Age of Majority and Agreement for Services Post Majority \(SPM\),"](#) prior to the youth's 18th birthday indicating his or her desire to continue receiving services;
- have successfully completed a DCF-approved Life Skills Program;
- have a Post-Secondary Education Plan approved by a DCF Post-Secondary Education Consultant;
- be enrolled and in good standing (in accordance with the standards of the institution) in an educational or vocational program; and
- have a referral packet reviewed and approved by the DCF Central Office CHAP Coordinator.

ADOLESCENT SERVICES

Adolescent and Young Adult Programs

42-3

**CHAP
Eligibility and
Program
Requirements
(continued)**

Note: Successful completion of the Life Skills Program alone shall not entitle a youth to CHAP admission.

Youth shall account for, at a minimum, 40 productive hours per week. A productive hour is defined as time devoted to:

- classes;
- study;
- extra-curricular activities;
- part-time work;
- internship;
- volunteering;
- training;
- apprenticeship;
- treatment activities; or
- any combination of these activities.

Ten of the 40 hours shall be dedicated to a part-time job, internship, training or apprenticeship program. A youth who cannot identify one of these four options shall volunteer a minimum of ten hours per week.

During summer breaks, the youth shall work, participate in a summer youth employment program, take classes or intern in his or her chosen profession and shall be required to save half of his or her earnings. Yearly documentation of the youth's savings plan and ability to provide for him- or herself after leaving DCF shall be documented in the LINK narrative each September.

Youth in a post-secondary vocational training program may be eligible to continue receiving support from DCF through the end of the school year of his or her 21st birthday as long as he or she meets the eligibility criteria.

Youth in a post-secondary college degree program may be eligible for extended support from DCF through the school year of the youth's 23rd birthday as long as he or she remains in compliance with the continuation requirements.

Cross reference: DCF Policy 42-4, "Post-Secondary Education."

ADOLESCENT SERVICES

Adolescent and Young Adult Programs

42-3

CHAP Eligibility and Program Requirements (continued)

The CHAP contract shall be written by the Adolescent Specialist in conjunction with the youth and signed twice a year as part of the ACR process. The contract shall be reviewed quarterly by the youth and the Adolescent Specialist and the Community Case Manager (if applicable), and shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- agreed-upon place of residence;
- roles and responsibilities of the youth, DCF and Community Case Manager and caregiver;
- plan for full-time educational or vocational program;
- financial arrangements (e.g., budget, savings);
- statement regarding a proposed timeline to attain self-sufficiency and review dates to determine progress, including anticipated length of community case management;
- statement regarding the youth's successful completion in a DCF-approved Life Skills Program or other recommended programming;
- statement regarding actions to be taken if the youth does not comply with the terms of the contract or program requirements; and
- statement regarding DCF-approved roommates.

A youth may be discharged from the CHAP program if he or she has:

- achieved self-sufficiency to the extent that there is no longer a need for financial support or services from DCF;
- made a voluntary decision to no longer participate in the program;
- passed from care or has had commitment revoked by the court; or
- demonstrated an inability to meet the requirements of the program or terms of the contract.

Youth who are not in compliance and are at risk of losing DCF benefits shall be given written notice through the [DCF-800, "Notice of Proposed Action and Right to a Fair Hearing"](#) as soon as the youth is deemed to be out of compliance by the Adolescent Specialist. The youth's Adolescent Specialist shall also mail or give directly to the client the [DCF-800A, "Client's Agreement to Suspend, Reduce or Terminate Department of Children and Families Benefits."](#) If the client wishes to have a hearing, he or she must complete the reverse side of the DCF-800 and mail it to the Administrative Hearings Unit within 60 days of the date the notice was mailed. DCF shall hold a meeting with the youth and review the [DCF-2092 "Adolescent Discharge Plan"](#) to discuss the details outlined in the discharge and transition plan.

ADOLESCENT SERVICES

Adolescent and Young Adult Programs

42-3

Funding

Funding for CHAP housing is based on the current Housing and Urban Development (HUD) fair market rental rates for a one bedroom apartment that includes heat or based on housing costs allowed under the foster care rate for youth age 16 years and older. Stipend amounts are based on the current cost of living set by federal and state guidelines.

Note: Refer to the Adolescent Procedure Manual for specific rate information.

DCF may provide:

- a one-time apartment deposit for eligible CHAP youth. The apartment deposit may include the first and last month's rent but may not exceed the Area Office rental amount as established by DCF. If a youth successfully completes his or her post-secondary education or vocational program, the youth may keep the deposit;
- an eligible youth with a maximum of \$1,500.00 which must be used for the purchase of furniture;
- eligible youth with a maximum of \$150.00 for the purchase of housewares and household supplies. Youth living in on-campus housing may access these funds for room start-up items if needed;
- an eligible youth with a one-time payment voucher or a direct payment to a vendor not to exceed \$100.00 for the purchase of food staple items.

When calculating a youth's monthly subsidy, the post-secondary annual funding limit shall be taken into consideration. After tuition, books and fees are calculated and subtracted from the limit, the remaining amount may be used for rent and stipend as long as the costs are within the established funding amounts. CHAP categories and line item limits contained within this policy shall not be exceeded.

If a youth receives Social Security benefits or any other entitlements, this funding shall be subtracted from the funding limits provided in this policy and shall be considered as part of the overall budget for the youth.

If a youth is participating in a paid internship, fellowship or any learning opportunity that involves a subsidy, this funding shall be subtracted from the funding limits provided in this policy and shall be considered as part of the overall budget for the youth.

Additional funding for housing and living are available during school breaks if the youth has reached the post-secondary education funding limit. Any funding for school breaks must follow the funding structure below.

If a youth in post-secondary education returns to stay with his or her biological parent(s) during school breaks, the youth shall be eligible for the CHAP stipend only.

ADOLESCENT SERVICES

Adolescent and Young Adult Programs

42-3

Funding (continued)

If a youth is attending an approved post-secondary education program out of state and is living off-campus, the HUD fair market rental rates for that state and area where the youth is living shall be used when calculating the monthly rental subsidy. DCF CHAP boarding rates shall be utilized if the youth is boarding out of state.

CHAP stipends may be used for youth in out-of-state and boarding arrangements.

For a youth who is in college or a vocational program on a full-time basis and who is residing on campus (*e.g.*, college, Job Corps) he or she may receive a stipend as monthly financial support if, when added to tuition, room and board, it does not exceed the yearly post-secondary education funding limits.

If a youth is attending a college or vocational program in which housing or any of the items in the stipend categories are being provided, the youth shall be eligible only for those categories not covered or that do not exceed the identified CHAP stipend amounts. This includes summer internships and bridge programs.

If a youth will be residing in the home of a relative, friend or former foster parent, the responsible adult(s) in the home shall sign the youth's CHAP contract, agreeing to such an arrangement. The roles, rules and responsibilities of all persons involved must be identified and agreed upon in the youth's CHAP contract and updated quarterly.

Note: Any funding going directly to an identified adult in the household for rent is considered taxable and reportable income.

Employment shall be required under the CHAP program once the youth has demonstrated academic stability (*e.g.*, following a successful freshman year). A youth shall be employed for a minimum of ten hours per week and for no more than 20 hours per week. Youth shall commit to a savings plan.

Fifty percent of a youth's earned income may be used for discretionary spending, as determined by the youth. The remaining 50% of earned income shall be deposited into an interest-bearing savings account and saved for the youth's transition period from DCF.

Savings and planning for a youth's transition from care shall be documented in the CHAP contract at least every six months.

ADOLESCENT SERVICES

Adolescent and Young Adult Programs

42-3

Funding (continued)

Employment during the summer shall be required, unless the youth is in summer school full time. Employment sites shall be geared toward providing youth with experiences related to his or her career goals whenever possible. Unpaid internships related to the youth's course of study shall also be encouraged and, when appropriate, may be used as a substitute for paid summer employment.

Note: Youth must keep in mind what they will need to support themselves after leaving DCF care when making decisions on unpaid internships vs. paid employment.

Preparation for transitioning from care shall be taken into consideration if a waiver from the employment requirement is sought. The youth shall be required to submit his or her yearly savings account statement to the Adolescent Specialist to ensure that he or she does not leave DCF care inadequately funded. Social work staff shall also document in LINK, each September, efforts made to assist with and monitor the youth in his or her planning for the transition from care.

While involved in CHAP, a youth may receive two years of case management services up to his or her 21st birthday. **See** "Adolescent Procedure Manual" for case management services details.

Adolescent Parent Program and Funding

DCF shall provide funding for a youth in care who is the custodial parent of a minor child.

All services and opportunities that will assist the youth to become a healthy, responsible parent (*e.g.*, fatherhood training) shall be made available within DCF budget appropriations and in accordance with policy.

The Adolescent Specialist shall enter into LINK the expected due date of a pregnancy and the outcome. When a birth has been confirmed and paternity has been legally established, the child's information shall be entered and linked to the youth in care in the electronic record.

The Adolescent Specialist shall ensure that a committed youth under the age of 18 who is the custodial parent of a minor child is enrolled in Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) through the Department of Social Services (DSS). TFA provides:

- licensed day care so the youth may attend high school;
- medical coverage; and
- financial payments for the minor child.

DCF shall be responsible for any day care expenses incurred by the youth for work-related purposes. If written notification is received from DSS that day care funds through that agency are exhausted, DCF shall pay for the cost of a licensed day care provider.

ADOLESCENT SERVICES

Adolescent and Young Adult Programs

42-3

Adolescent Parent Program and Funding

Youth ages 18 or older who are CHAP, CHEER and SWETP participants and are the custodial parent of a child shall receive financial assistance from DCF. DCF payments shall include funds for:

- the youth's living needs;
- the minor child (at \$100.00 per month per child if not already included in the program rate); and
- licensed day care if needed.

Medical coverage for the minor child shall be provided by DSS.

DCF will provide necessary baby start-up equipment not secured through donor sources. The Adolescent Specialist shall assist the youth with developing a list of necessary start-up items and the costs. The Adolescent Specialist shall obtain approval for additional baby start-up costs from his or her Supervisor and Program Manager. Approved requests shall be entered into and paid through LINK.

The Adolescent Specialist shall document in the LINK narrative the requests for, and provision of, financial assistance and equipment.

Reproductive Health

Youth served by DCF shall have access to a full array of reproductive health services. DCF shall follow the Centers for Disease Control's, American Academy of Pediatrics' and American College of Obstetrics' recommendations for regular health care services including providing youth with information about the importance of delaying the initiation of sexual activity and about contraceptive options. DCF shall follow the established guidelines for meeting the reproductive health care needs for adolescents in care.

Youth ages 12 and up shall receive health guidance annually regarding responsible sexual behaviors, including abstinence. The array of birth control options (including but not limited to IUDs, birth control pills and condoms) and methods to prevent sexually transmitted infections (STIs) shall be made available along with instructions on how to use them effectively.

All sexually active females shall be offered a yearly routine gynecologic examination, including associated testing. The Social Worker or Adolescent Specialist shall make the referral to a gynecologist, family planning clinic or OB/GYN clinic as needed or requested by youth. The Social Worker or Adolescent Specialist shall ensure that well child visits are completed and documented in the case record (EPSDT).

DCF shall identify young parents for additional interventions focusing on delaying additional pregnancies.

ADOLESCENT SERVICES

Adolescent and Young Adult Programs

42-3

Mentoring The Department of Children and Families shall establish and maintain a statewide volunteer One-on-One mentoring program to offer youth age fourteen years and older and in out-of-home placement the services of an adult volunteer mentor.

Eligibility for Mentoring Program All youth age 14 and older in the care and custody of DCF are eligible for volunteer mentor services. Providers will prioritize assignments as follows:

- youth in foster homes
- youth in group homes
- youth in transitional living apartments, including Supported Work and Education and Transitions Programs (SWETP)
- youth in independent living apartments or the Community Housing Assistance Program (CHAP)
- youth in residential treatment

Exceptions may be made for the following by request to the Area Office Director in writing:

- youth under the age of 14
 - youth who are not in the care or custody of DCF.
-

Provider Responsibility for Mentoring Program

Providers are responsible for:

- recruiting, screening, training and supporting potential adult mentors;
 - provide ongoing training;
 - facilitates a match;
 - providing ongoing supervision to mentors;
 - providing recreational activities for mentors and mentees;
 - providing awards dinners, sports events, barbecues, excursions or outings two times per year;
 - maintaining data and submitting necessary reports to DCF;
 - providing standardized program outlines; and
 - providing ongoing supervision to mentors.
-

ADOLESCENT SERVICES

Adolescent and Young Adult Programs

42-3

Mentor Responsibilities Mentors shall have meaningful and dependable contact with his or her assigned mentee. This is achieved through:

- making a minimum of a one year commitment to the match;
- having weekly contact with the mentee;
- having face-to-face contact with the mentee a minimum of three times per month;
- attending two scheduled group events per year;
- attending two trainings per year;
- providing monthly contact logs or reports; and
- responding to yearly mentor surveys.

Mentee Responsibilities All youth in the One-on-One Mentoring Program shall:

- complete the interest inventory;
- make himself or herself available to the assigned mentor; and
- meet face-to-face with the mentor at least three times per month.