

## Chapter 2

## TRANSITION PLANNING FOR YOUTH

2-1. Purpose.

a. The development of life skills and preparation for that transition to adulthood begins at age 13 years of age; however, this chapter outlines policies for transition planning specific to the requirements referenced in s. [39.6035](#), Florida Statutes (F.S.), and preparing for judicial review hearings for children 17 years of age as referenced in s. [39.701](#), F.S.

b. This chapter describes policies relevant to effective transition planning for older youth under the protective supervision of the Department, providing specific guidance as to the roles and responsibilities of child welfare professionals and caregivers, and timeframes as to when a transition plan must be developed and finalized. The chapter also details the information that needs to be addressed in the plan and the relevant records or resources that must be exchanged in preparation for the youth's transition to adulthood.

2-2. Definitions.

a. "Transition Plan." The required written plan developed by the youth or young adult that contains the goals, choices, and decisions for obtaining or maintaining the services necessary to successfully transition to adulthood. The plan provides details on the transition services outlined in the case plan, and identifies and explains roles of the supportive adult or designated staff assisting in services.

b. "My Pathway to Success Plan." A universal form (CF-FSP [5425](#), available in DCF Forms) that the youth or young adult utilizes to detail the goals, choices, and decisions for obtaining or maintaining the services necessary to successfully transition to adulthood. Once completed, the document becomes that youth's individual Transition Plan.

c. "Independent Living Specialist." A child welfare professional that exhibits a level of subject matter expertise in the delivery of independent living services and fully comprehends program eligibility for Extended Foster Care (EFC), Postsecondary Education Services and Support (PESS), and Aftercare Services.

d. "Transitioning Youth." Children 16-17 years of age, that have not yet reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, under the Department's protective supervision.

e. "Transition Facilitator." A designated child welfare professional that establishes a positive relationship with the Transitioning Youth, proficient in both case management and independent living services, that takes the lead in coordinating the development of the transition plan and ensures that the requirements in ss. 39.6035 and [39.701\(3\)](#), F.S., are satisfied for each youth.

f. "Records and Resources Exchanged." A universal form (CF-FSP [5426](#), available in DCF Forms) used to document the required information that must be provided to the youth during the youth's period of transition.

g. "Transition Planning Meeting." A time when the Transitioning Youth, Transition Facilitator, and other chosen Supportive Adult(s) meet to develop, review and/or finalize the Transition Plan.

h. "Supportive Adult." A positive, potentially permanently connected adult that is willing and able to assist the Transitioning Youth with the youth's Transition Plan and provide encouragement in the youth's transition to adulthood.

### 2-3. Roles and Responsibilities.

a. Caregivers are required to take the lead in a number of activities demonstrating quality parenting such as assisting youth in mastering age appropriate life skills. It is the responsibility of child welfare professionals to work collaboratively, supporting the caregiver and Transitioning Youth as he or she makes the transition to adulthood.

b. The Independent Living Specialist assesses and manages the life skills and independent living service delivery to older foster youth and eligible young adults. This designated child welfare professional must team with the Transition Facilitator, assisting in acquiring and sharing critical case information that may impact the youth's transition.

c. The Transition Facilitator takes the lead role in ensuring that each Transitioning Youth has an opportunity to develop a comprehensive plan and receives the required records and resources necessary to help him or her become self-sufficient.

d. The Independent Living Specialist and Transition Facilitator may be the same child welfare professional as the roles are not mutually exclusive.

e. The Transitioning Youth shall develop an individualized Transition Plan utilizing the My Pathways to Success Plan (form CF-FSP [5425](#), available in DCF Forms) and establish a list of Supportive Adults that may contribute to the planning and development process. These actions shall be in collaboration with the Transition Facilitator.

(1) If the Transitioning Youth has an impairment due to a physical, intellectual, emotional, or psychiatric condition that substantially limits his or her ability to develop the plan, the Transition Facilitator shall aid in developing the plan with the Transitioning Youth and the youth's caregiver, as well as other Supportive Adults such as potential guardians, individuals from the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD), and School District personnel.

(2) The Transition Facilitator must also assist in ensuring that diligent efforts are made by relevant child welfare professionals to obtain a plenary guardian or legal guardianship for Transitioning Youth who are receiving services from APD, are on the APD waiting list, or any youth as specified in s. [39.701\(3\)\(b\)1](#), F.S. A guardian must be identified to assist with informed decisions made on the youth's behalf when the youth reaches 18 years of age.

(3) In the event the Transitioning Youth is unable to write the Transition Plan, the Transition Facilitator shall assist in writing the plan using the responses provided by the youth or the youth's guardian and coordinate with case management staff to determine revisions to the case plan.

### 2-4. Pre-Planning, Assessment, and Review.

a. In order to assist the youth in transition, the Transition Facilitator shall establish a positive relationship with the Transitioning Youth. Building a connection is an important step in establishing trust and respect which will in turn yield a more productive Transition Plan.

(1) To establish or maintain a positive connection with the youth, a Transition Facilitator shall participate in both formal and informal meetings with the youth by attending some home visits, court hearings, permanency staffings, appointments, and school and community events. These meetings will not only keep the Transition Facilitator well-informed about important case related information but will also assist in rapport building.

(2) If the youth is residing out of the assigned direct service area and the primary Transition Facilitator is unable to establish the face to face contact necessary to maintain a positive relationship, a courtesy Transition Facilitator must take the lead.

(3) At every opportunity the Transition Facilitator shall engage the youth in conversation about topics that will elicit ideas for successfully reaching life goals. Getting the youth to begin critically thinking about his or her future is a key element in pre-planning.

(4) Conversation between the Transition Facilitator and Transitioning Youth shall cover elements that will be captured in the Transition Plan and Records and Resources Exchanged form. There must also be dialogue to identify individuals whom the youth would like to attend the Transition Planning Meeting(s) and/or assist the youth in the development of the Transition Plan.

b. In addition to establishing or maintaining a relationship, the Transition Facilitator shall conduct an informal assessment of the youth's wellbeing, utilizing all records available, and determine strengths and needs pertinent to the development of the Transition Plan. Any needs must be addressed during the Transition Planning Meeting(s) and discussed separately with relevant child welfare professionals. A thorough evaluation of the youth's wellbeing will include a review of documents to include, but not be limited to:

(1) Child Functioning as detailed in the ongoing Family Functioning Assessment.

(2) Department of Juvenile Justice Records.

(a) Face Sheet.

(b) Risk Assessment.

(3) Behavioral Health Records.

(a) Comprehensive Behavioral Health Assessment.

(b) Psychological and Psychiatric Evaluations.

(c) Treatment Plans.

(4) Physical Health Records.

(5) Education Records.

(a) Individualized Education Plan.

(b) 504 Plan.

(6) Life Skills Assessment(s)

2-5 Records and Resources Exchanged. The item identified in paragraphs 2-5b and c below are included on form CF-FSP [5426](#) (available in DCF Forms). The list is not meant to be exhaustive. The form includes space for the Transition Plan Facilitator and Independent Living Specialist to add additional items that need to be included to promote wellbeing during the transition to adulthood.

a. Providing youth with essential records and resources during their period of transition shall begin as age appropriate for each applicable item. For example, having a discussion with and providing information to youth at 14 years of age regarding the credit check requirements and the results of those reports would be age appropriate. Another example is obtaining or having a discussion

regarding the court order that removes the youth's disability of nonage that may occur as early as 16 years of age because the youth desires to open his or her own individual bank account or obtain his or her own car insurance.

b. A list of required documents and information to be provided to the Transitioning Youth includes, but is not be limited to:

- (1) Birth Certificate.
- (2) Social Security Card.
- (3) Florida Identification Card.
- (4) Driver's/Learner's License.
- (5) Medicaid Card.
- (6) Bank Account.
- (7) Master Trust Account (if applicable).
- (8) Medical/Dental.
- (9) Behavioral Health.
- (10) Education.
- (11) Disability of nonage court order.
- (12) Letter providing dates that the child is under jurisdiction of the court.
- (13) Process for accessing case file.
- (14) Provide Financial Literacy Curriculum by Department of Financial Services (DFS).
- (15) Independent Living Programs.
- (16) Health Care Surrogate Designation of Power of Attorney.
- (17) ACCESS Florida Public Assistance Programs.

c. A list of recommended documents and information to provide the Transitioning Youth (if applicable) includes, but is not be limited to:

- (1) Photographs.
- (2) Immigration.
- (3) Voter Registration.
- (4) Credit Check.
- (5) Juvenile Justice.
- (6) Life Skills Assessment(s).

- (7) Pregnant and Parenting.
- (8) Budget.
- (9) Criminal Record Expunction.
- (10) Tuition and Fee Exemption.
- (11) Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
- (12) Scholarships.
- (13) Keys to Independence Program.
- (14) Social Security Administration.
- (15) Career Source Florida.
- (16) Supportive Adult Contacts.
- (17) Disability.

d. The Records and Resources Exchanged form must be signed by the Transition Facilitator attesting to meeting the requirements pursuant to s. [39.701\(3\)](#), F.S., and filed with the court to align with the special 17-year-old judicial review hearing which occurs within 90 days of the youth's 17<sup>th</sup> birthday.

#### 2-6. Developing and Updating the Transition Plan.

a. Transition Plans must be constructed utilizing the My Pathway to Success Plan (form CF-FSP [5425](#), available in DCF Forms). The form is designed to encourage the youth to critically think about the youth's future and make realistic goals prior to writing down a plan for each specific subject area.

b. The Transition Plan shall be as detailed as the youth chooses and be conducted in the youth's primary language as specified in s. [39.6035](#), F.S.

c. The My Pathway to Success Plan form lists the following subjects:

(1) Short Term Goals. This subject addresses the youth's planned accomplishments in the near future such as graduating high school, getting a part time job, and obtaining a driver license. The plan may also include intangible goals such as develop better study habits or be more cooperative with the trusted adults helping with the Transition Plan. The youth shall also reference the supportive adults, along with the programs that will assist in the process. The programs may include EFC, PESS, and Aftercare Services, if applicable.

(2) Long Term Goals. This subject lists goals specific to something that youth wants to do further into the future such as graduating college, becoming a physical therapist, moving to Australia, and buying a car. The youth may also want to write down intangible goals such as improving a relationship with family members or becoming financially self-sufficient. The youth will also reference the supportive adults, along with the programs that will assist in the process.

(3) Housing. This subject specifies where the youth wants to live after turning 18 years old and what preparations need to be made, taking into consideration the current living situation and

permanency goal. For youth who are likely to age out of care in EFC, an appropriate living arrangement option must also be listed.

(4) Health Insurance. This subject addresses health insurance coverage, giving consideration to the youth's current Medicaid Managed Care plan. The plan may include consulting with a child welfare professional to discuss possible options, benefits, and requirements for continued enrollment after the youth reaches 18 years of age.

(5) Education. This subject covers the strategy for achieving the youth's educational goals. A step by step approach to reaching the goal may be for the youth to write down the career or job title desired and then write what degree or certification is required, along with the schools that may have reputable programs and services for supporting former foster youth. The youth shall also give consideration on tuition and other costs associated with their goal.

(6) Financial Literacy. This subject details the steps necessary to acquire the skills and knowledge that enables the youth to understand and make good decisions about money. Consideration shall be given to the existing tools and publications that promote financial education such as the programs provided by Florida Department of Financial Services.

(7) Driver's License. This subject details the plan for obtaining licensure and the steps required such as taking the Drug and Alcohol Safety Course. This may include the Keys to Independence Program or other applicable resources available to assist in reaching the goal. Consideration must be given to the age and development of the youth.

(8) Workforce Support and Employment Services. This subject includes the detail needed to accomplish goals relevant to a career. However, the information may or may not sync with specific education goals as the youth may choose to list out tasks necessary to acquire a part time job while completing secondary education or attending a postsecondary institution. The first activity may be to visit a local or online resource for guidance on completing a resume or filling out a job application.

d. The development of the Transition Plan must begin when the youth turns 16 years of age.

(1) A draft of the initial written Transition Plan must be completed no later than 16½ years of age to allow child welfare professionals and caregiver(s) adequate time to work with the youth in meeting the goals in the youth's plan and address any skills deficiencies.

(2) The initial Transition Plan must be filed with the court to align with the special 17-year-old judicial review hearing occurring within the 90 days of the youth's 17<sup>th</sup> birthday pursuant to s. [39.701\(3\)](#), F.S.

e. If the Department begins protective supervision any time after the youth's 16<sup>th</sup> birthday, the Transition Plan must be initiated within 30 days. The Transition Plan must be completed within 90 days after the start of the Department's protective supervision or prior to the first judicial review, whichever comes first. If protective supervision begins within the 90-day period prior to the youth's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, transition planning must begin immediately to include the completion of the written plan.

f. The Transition Facilitator must encourage and guide the Transitioning Youth to update sections of the My Pathway to Success Plan as often as necessary to ensure that the Transition Plan reflects the most relevant goals and circumstances to meet the needs in the youth's life.

g. Regardless of how often the My Pathway to Success Plan has been revised, an updated Transition Plan must be documented during the 90-day period immediately prior to the date on which the youth will attain 18 years of age.

h. If the Transitioning Youth is eligible and plans to remain in EFC after turning 18 years old the Transition Facilitator must ensure that the Transition Plan includes an agreement detailing the chosen qualifying activity and supervised living arrangement as referenced in Rule [65C-41.004](#), Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.).

i. The finalized My Pathway to Success Plan will serve as the last written Transition Plan unless the youth transitions to EFC.

#### 2-7 Transition Plan Meetings.

a. The Transition Facilitator is responsible for scheduling the meeting and must consult with the youth, scheduling a date, time, and place to begin formally drafting the initial Transition Plan.

(1) A list of Supportive Adults must be developed and those adults invited to attend the meeting as approved by the Transitioning Youth and Transition Facilitator.

(2) In the instance that a Transitioning Youth provides the Transition Facilitator a completed My Pathway to Success Plan at the time of the initial meeting, the meeting shall focus on going over the youth responses and assisting the youth in enhancing areas that may need further detail.

b. The Transition Facilitator may schedule additional meetings as needed to ensure the Transition Plan is updated and reflects the most relevant goals and circumstances to meet the needs of the youth.

#### 2-8. FSFN Documentation.

a. Initial Transition Plan Meetings must be documented in the FSFN Meetings Module using the meeting type of "Transition Planning – Initial."

b. Follow up meetings and/or updates to the Transition Plan must be documented in the FSFN Meetings Module using the meeting type of "Transition Planning – Ongoing."

c. All Transition Plans finalized during the 90-day period immediately prior to the date on which the youth will attain 18 years of age must be documented in the FSFN Meetings Module using the meeting type of "Transition Planning – Closure."

d. Both the My Pathway to Success Plan (form CF-FSP [5425](#)) and the Records and Resources Exchanged (form CF-FSP [5426](#)) must be scanned into FSFN and attached to the Meeting page using the appropriate meeting type.

