



**State of Florida  
Department of Children and Families**

**Rick Scott**  
Governor

**Esther Jacobo**  
Interim Secretary

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**DATE:** December 18, 2013

**TO:** Regional Managing Directors  
Community-Based Care Lead Agencies

**THROUGH:** Pete Digte, Deputy Secretary  
H. Stephen Pennypacker, Esq., Assistant Secretary for Programs  
Andrea M. Tulloch, Esq., Director, Office of Child Welfare

**FROM:** Elisa Cramer, Director, Family and Community Services

**SUBJECT:** Extended Foster Care-Independent Living Redesign Implementation

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**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this memorandum is to provide policy guidance, training details and resource information surrounding the implementation of the "Nancy C. Detert Common Sense and Compassion Independent Living Act," which – effective Jan. 1, 2014 – allows 18-year-olds to remain in foster care until they turn 21, or until they turn 22 if they are disabled. The new law also redesigns the Independent Living program, enacting a new Postsecondary Education Services and Support (PESS) program for young adults who are over 18 but not yet 23, and an Aftercare Services program for young adults who are not in Extended Foster Care (EFC) or PESS.

This memorandum also introduces the new Independent Living Resource Guide, an online resource that is available for download and printing. The Guide is designed to be a one-stop resource for anyone interested in learning more about the new Extended Foster Care program, Postsecondary Education Services and Support program, and Aftercare Services. Posted on the Center for Child Welfare site, the Resource Guide also offers useful support to caregivers, case managers and other child welfare professionals, mentors and advocates for successful engagement with older youth and young adults.

**BACKGROUND:** The federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 provides support to states to extend foster care to age 21. Florida Gov. Rick Scott signed Senate Bill 1036 into law on June 24, 2013. The legislation, sponsored by Sen. Nancy Detert and Rep. Keith Perry, authorized programs to extend foster care to age 21, enact the Postsecondary Education Services and Support program and a new Aftercare Services program, and grandfather in existing Road-to-Independence participants, beginning Jan. 1, 2014.

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The Legislative intent of the new law reflects a keen understanding of the significant challenges and poor outcomes for many young people who have aged out of foster care at age 18. “The Legislature recognizes that most children and young adults are resilient and, with adequate support, can expect to be successful as independent adults. Not unlike many young adults, some young adults who have lived in foster care need additional support and resources for a period of time after reaching 18 years of age. The Legislature finds that while it is important to provide young adults who have lived in foster care with education and independent living skills, there is also a need to focus more broadly on creating and preserving family relationships so that young adults have a permanent connection with at least one committed adult who provides a safe and stable parenting relationship. It is the intent of the Legislature that young adults who choose to participate in the program receive the skills, education, and support necessary to become self-sufficient and leave foster care with a lifelong connection to a supportive adult...” ss. 409.1451(1)(a-c), F.S.

**INDEPENDENT LIVING RESOURCE GUIDE:** The Department has developed the Independent Living Resource Guide to assist all who will be implementing the “Nancy C. Detert Common Sense and Compassion Independent Living Act.” The Guide contains an overview of each program (EFC, PESS, Aftercare Services) and includes information on changes to the Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN); new budget codes and reporting categories; fliers, posters and presentations to help spread the news about the new programs; best practices for case management and transition planning for older youth and young adults; and answers to frequently asked questions.

The Resource Guide can be accessed through the Center for Child Welfare website at <http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/IndependentLiving/extendedfc.shtml> and will be updated as additional information and useful resources become available. Attached is a portion of the Resource Guide, a compilation of Frequently Asked Questions about EFC, PESS, Aftercare and RTI.

**NEW FSFN FUNCTIONALITY:** Effective Dec. 15, the Independent Living pages in FSFN have been updated to support implementation of EFC and PESS. Major changes include:

- The capacity to determine and document eligibility for EFC and PESS
- A Young Adult Case Plan Worksheet that is used to create and update the Young Adult Case Plan
- A Young Adult Judicial Review Worksheet that is used to create and update the Young Adult Judicial Review.

An e-learning for the new FSFN Independent Living enhancements is available at <http://centervideo.forest.usf.edu/fsfn/ilenhance/start.html>.

A Q&A webinar also has been scheduled as a follow-up to this e-learning module. Participants are encouraged to view the e-learning first and attend the Q&A webinar for the opportunity to ask questions. The webinar is scheduled for Thursday, Dec. 19, from



10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. (Eastern). To register for this webinar, please see the webinar invitation attached to this memorandum.

**FINANCIAL:** The FSFN Reporting Category Reference Guide provides guidance for appropriately recording in FSFN all services provided for young adults who participate in EFC and PESS. The new Reporting Categories and Other Cost Accumulators (OCAs) listed in the Reference Guide are now available in FSFN for CBCs to begin linking their new service types to these categories. The updated guide is available at <http://centerforchildwelfare2.fmhi.usf.edu/kb/indliv/FSFN-ReportingCategoriesRefDRAFT.pdf>.

**RESOURCES:** For system documentation (topic paper, user guide, How-Do-I Guide) and e-learning to support the new FSFN functionality, go to the Center for Child Welfare website: <http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/FSFN/FSFN.shtml>.

Additional policy guidance on creating a new FSFN case for young adults in Extended Foster Care can be found at: <http://centerforchildwelfare2.fmhi.usf.edu/kb/policymemos/FSFNPolicyGuidanceLL.pdf>.

Details of workarounds for known defects in the new FSFN functionality are posted at: <http://centerforchildwelfare2.fmhi.usf.edu/kb/policymemos/FSFNKnownIssuesWorkarounds.pdf>.

The Dec. 13 "Options for Youth 18+" Webcast, sponsored by the Quality Parenting Initiative, is now available, with attachments for downloading, at: <http://centervideo.forest.usf.edu/qpi/optsforyouth/optsforyouth.html>

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please disseminate this memorandum and the attachments to all child welfare staff, Community-Based Care lead agencies, Independent Living Service providers and coordinators, and Children's Legal Services.

**CONTACT INFORMATION:** If you believe the new FSFN functionality is not working as it should, please contact the DCF helpdesk at (850) 487-9400 or [dcf\\_helpdesk@dcf.state.fl.us](mailto:dcf_helpdesk@dcf.state.fl.us). If you have questions about the FSFN Reporting Category Reference Guide, please contact Barney Ray at [barney\\_ray@dcf.state.fl.us](mailto:barney_ray@dcf.state.fl.us) or (850) 717-4700. Policy questions about the implementation of the new law extending foster care may be submitted to Melanie B. Coats at (850) 487-2251 or [Melanie\\_Coats@dcf.state.fl.us](mailto:Melanie_Coats@dcf.state.fl.us).

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