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# REFERENCE MATERIALS

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COMMON ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ENDNOTES

CHARTS



## COMMON ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Acronym	Explanation	Comments
AAL	Attorney ad litem	An attorney who provides services for the purposes of a specific legal action only, including representation of a child, and who owes to their client the duties of undivided loyalty, confidentiality, and competent representation.
AC	Administrative Closure	Administrative Closure occurs when DFPS intervention is unwarranted based on information that comes to light after the case is assigned for investigation.
ADO	Adoption Caseworker	The DFPS caseworker assigned once the case is transferred to the adoption unit.
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution	A method of settling conflict outside of litigation, (e.g., mediation).
AFCARS	Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System	An application that collects case-level information on all children in foster care for whom state child welfare agencies have responsibility for placement, care, or supervision, and on children who are adopted under the auspices of the state's public child welfare agency.
AJR	Administrative Judicial Region	The state of Texas is divided into nine administrative judicial regions. Each region has a presiding judge who is appointed by the Governor to serve a four-year term.
AOP	Acknowledgement of Paternity	An acknowledgement of paternity is a legal document that allows parents who are not married to establish legal paternity. Both parents must sign an AOP, under penalty of perjury, that the man is the genetic father of the child. When an AOP is filed with Texas Vital Statistics, the genetic father becomes the child's legal father with all the rights and duties of a parent.
APPLA	Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement	A permanent legal arrangement for a child designed to promote stability and permanency in a child's life; refers to permanent placements other than a reunification with a parent, adoption, or permanent managing conservatorship to a relative.

ASFA	Adoption and Safe Families Act	The Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (P.L. 105-89) was enacted by the United States Congress to improve the safety of children, promote adoption and other permanent homes for children who needed them, and support families. According to the Children's Bureau, ASFA also required child welfare agencies to provide more timely assessment and intervention services to children and families involved with child welfare. Additionally, ASFA paved the way for the legal sanction of concurrent planning (simultaneously identifying and working on a secondary goal, such as guardianship, with a relative) by requiring that agencies make reasonable efforts to find permanent families for children in foster care should reunification fail.
AR	Alternative Response	A type of service provided to some families who were the subject of an investigation of child abuse and neglect allegations without including a substantiation of the allegations or an entry of perpetrators into the Central Registry. Includes services and support to help families resolve safety issues and reduce future involvement with DFPS.
ARD	Admission, Review, and Dismissal	The process by which a student's parents and school staff meet at least annually to 1) decide whether a student has an eligible disability; 2) determine what special education and related services will be provided; and 3) develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP).
BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs	The United States federal agency within the Department of the Interior which renders services to indigenous Americans in federally recognized Tribes (directly or through contracts, grants, or compacts) to approximately 1.9 million Native Americans and Alaska Natives.
BVS/VSU	Bureau of Vital Statistics/Vital Statistics Unit	The state agency responsible for maintaining legal records for birth, death, marriage, adoption, and paternity.
CAC	Child Advocacy Center	A safe, child-friendly, specially equipped facility that completes forensic interviews of children. CACs also provide additional services such as counseling and intervention services during the course of an investigation and prosecution of child abuse cases.
CANS	Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths	A tool developed by DFPS for children's services to support decision making, including level of care and service planning, to facilitate quality improvement initiatives, and to allow for the monitoring of outcomes.
CAPTA	Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act	A federal law that was originally enacted on January 31, 1974 (P.L. 93-247) and has been amended several times. According to the Children's Bureau, CAPTA provides federal funding and guidance to states in support of prevention, assessment, investigation, prosecution, and treatment activities and also provides grants to public agencies and nonprofit organizations, including Indian Tribes and Tribal organizations, for demonstration programs and projects.

CASA	Court Appointed Special Advocate; <a href="#">Website</a>	A specially screened and trained volunteer, appointed by the court, who conducts an independent investigation of child abuse, neglect, or other dependency matters, and submits a formal report proffering advisory recommendations as to the best interests of a child. In some jurisdictions, volunteers without formal legal training, such as CASAs, are appointed to represent abused and neglected children and serve in the capacity of a Guardian ad litem (GAL).
CCEJ	Court of Continuing, Exclusive Jurisdiction	Upon rendition of a final order in a Suit Affecting the Parent-Child Relationship (SAPCR), a court acquires continuing, exclusive jurisdiction over all subsequent matters regarding the child unless otherwise provided by the Family Code.
CFRT	Texas Child Fatality Review Team; <a href="#">Webpage</a>	A multidisciplinary, multi-agency group, mandated by state law which oversees and assists the work of local review teams in Texas, and works to develop a statewide understanding of the scope and magnitude of childhood mortality.
CFSR	Child and Family Services Review	A Federal-State collaborative effort designed to help ensure that quality services are provided to children and families through State child welfare systems.
CIP	Court Improvement Program; <a href="#">Webpage</a>	The highest court of each State and territory participating in the Court Improvement Program (CIP) receives a grant from the Children's Bureau to complete a detailed self-assessment and develop and implement recommendations to enhance the court's role in achieving stable, permanent homes for children in foster care. In Texas, the Children's Commission is the recipient of CIP funds.
COS	Circle of Support	A meeting held soon after a youth who has been removed from the home reaches age 16. Its primary purpose is to develop a transition plan for the youth and to connect youth to supportive and caring adults who can help the youth when the youth leaves foster care.
COS	Court Ordered Services	A type of CPS case during which services are ordered by the court for the family, without DFPS having temporary managing conservatorship of the child. Depending on jurisdictional practice, this may also be referred to as a Motion to Participate (MTP), Order to Participate (OTP), or Participation case.
CBC	Community Based Care	A newer model of serving children and families through partnerships with private Single Source Continuum Contractors (SSCCs) in designated catchment areas across the State. Often referred to as Privatization.
CPA	Child Placing Agency	An agency that is licensed by DFPS and required to conform to minimum standards. They verify and oversee non-agency foster placements.
CPC	Child Protection Court	A court that specializes in child welfare cases. As of July 2021, there are 30 CPCs in Texas which cover 147 counties total.

CPI	Child Protective Investigations; <a href="#">Website</a>	A division of Texas DFPS that examines reports of child abuse or neglect and determines if there are any threats to the safety of the children in the home and whether parents are willing and able to adequately manage those threats to keep the children safe.
CPS	Child Protective Services; <a href="#">Website</a>	A division of Texas DFPS that provides services to children and families in their own homes; places children in foster care; provides services to help youth in foster care make the transition to adulthood; and places children in adoptive homes.
CPOS	Child Plan of Service	The written plan that outlines the services to be provided, who is responsible for the completion of that service, and establishes goals for the child.
CPCMS	Child Protection Case Management System	The court case management system used by Child Protection Courts (CPCs).
CPU	Centralized Placement Unit	A unit at DFPS that reviews a child's information, tracks placement vacancies, and determines the least restrictive placement option that best meets the needs of child when a child is in the custody of DFPS.
CRCG	Community Resource Coordination Group	A group that is a collaboration of local public and private agencies, organizations, and families which work together to meet the needs of individuals which no one agency can meet. According to HHS, CRCGs identify services gaps, break down barriers, and find ways to improve the health of their community.
CSCAL	Child Safety Check Alert List	This is an automated program operated by the Texas Department of Public Safety as part of the Texas Crime Information Center to assist DFPS in locating families that move before CPS begins or finishes an investigation or that move during the provision of services by CPS.
CVS	Conservatorship/ Conservatorship Unit; <a href="#">Website</a>	The term used to define the legal care, custody, and control of a child given by court order. CVS also stands for the unit and type of caseworker who is involved with a child when the DFPS has custody of that child.
CWB	Child Welfare Board; Texas Council of CWBs <a href="#">Website</a>	These Boards are developed and funded in some Texas counties to help meet needs of children and youth in foster care by using county funding to support DFPS' efforts.
CWOP	Child Without Placement	CWOP is used to describe a child's status as not having a licensed placement (for example, residing in a nontraditional location such as a hotel, while still being supervised by DFPS or an SSCC).

DFPS/ TDFPS	Texas Department of Family and Protective Services; <a href="#">Website</a>	The state agency charged with protecting children, adults who are elderly or have disabilities living at home or in state facilities, and licensing group day-care homes, day-care centers, and registered family homes.
DPS	Texas Department of Public Safety; <a href="#">Website</a>	The state agency created to provide public safety services by enforcing laws, administering regulatory programs, managing records, educating the public, and managing emergencies, both directly and through interaction with other agencies.
DSM	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders	The guidebook used by mental health professionals in the diagnosis of many mental health conditions. The DSM is published by the American Psychiatric Association and has been revised multiple times since it was first introduced in 1952. The most recent edition is the fifth, or the DSM-5. It was published in 2013.
DSHS	Texas Department of State Health Services; <a href="#">Website</a>	The state agency that promotes optimal health for individuals and communities while providing effective health, mental health, and substance abuse services to Texans.
ESSA	Every Child Succeeds Act	A federal education law passed in December 2015. ESSA contains several educational stability provisions related to the education of children and youth in foster care that mirror the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008. ESSA also requires designated points of contact in education and child welfare systems, assurances that schools will coordinate with child welfare to develop transportation plans for children in foster care, and beginning in December 2018, disaggregated data on children and youth in foster care will be included in the reporting requirements.
FFPSA	Family First Prevention Services Act	A federal law that was signed into law as part of the Bipartisan Budget Act on February 9, 2018. This act reforms the federal child welfare financing streams (Title IV-E and Title IV-B of the Social Security Act) to provide services to families who are at risk of entering the child welfare system. The bill aims to prevent children from entering foster care by allowing federal reimbursement for mental health services, substance use treatment, and in-home parenting skill training. It also seeks to improve the well-being of children already in foster care by incentivizing states to reduce placement of children in congregate care.
FBSS	Family-Based Safety Services; <a href="#">Website</a>	A type of service provided to some families who were the subject of an investigation of child abuse and neglect allegations. Also known as Family Preservation, FBSS includes services to families to prevent removal of the child from the home.

FCRB	Foster Care Review Board	Panels of screened and trained volunteers, preferably appointed by juvenile or family courts, to regularly review cases of children in substitute placement such as foster care, examine efforts to identify a permanent placement for each child, and proffer advisory recommendations to the court.
FC	Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act	According to the Children's Bureau, the 2008 Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act (P.L. 110–351) amended the Social Security Act to improve outcomes for children in foster care, connect and support relative caregivers, and offer incentives for adoption. Fostering Connections enhanced services for youth aging out of care and created new programs to help children and youth in or at risk of entering foster care to reconnect with family members.
FGC	Family Group Conference	A type of Family Group Decision Making. During an FGC, the child's family joins with relatives, friends, and community members to develop a plan for the child and family. These are generally held after a child is removed but may also be used before removal when the family receives FBSS.
FGDM	Family Group Decision Making	FGDM is a collaborative approach to service planning and decision-making, which involves the child or youth and their family joining CPS staff to develop a service plan for the child.
FPOS	Family Plan of Service	A plan designed to help parents access assistance from sources other than CPS and to develop the sufficient capacity to protect their children from abuse or neglect.
FSNA	Family Strengths and Needs Assessment	A tool developed to identify and create collaborative agreements about what the Family Plan of Service should address and determines strengths that may help with child safety.
FTM	Family Team Meeting	A type of Family Group Decision Making that is generally held before a child is removed from the home, but also may be held during other stages of services, such as when a family receives FBSS or when a child is in DFPS conservatorship.
GAL	Guardian ad litem	A person appointed by a judge to represent the best interests of an allegedly abused or neglected child. In many counties the GAL is a CASA.
GRO	General Residential Operation	A residential child-care operation that provides childcare for 13 or more children or young adults.
HHSC	Health and Human Services Commission	A state agency which oversees operations of the health and human services system.
HSEGH	Health, Social, Educational and Genetic History	The report that provides the child's information to prospective adoptive families.



ICPC	Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children	The federal law, originally enacted in 1960, provides a legal framework for the timely placement of children across state lines, the suitability of prospective families, and the provision of needed support services. The compact (1) applies to the interstate placement of children in the foster care system and children placed across state lines for adoption; (2) requires the development of time frames for completion of the approval process; (3) establishes clear rulemaking authority, (4) provides enforcement mechanisms; (5) clarifies state responsibility; and (6) ensures states' ability to purchase home studies from licensed agencies to expedite the process.
ICWA	Indian Child Welfare Act	The federal law, adopted by Congress in 1978, applies to child custody proceedings in state courts involving "Indian" children -- children of Native American ancestry.
IDD	Intellectual and Developmental Disability	A term used to describe differences that are usually present at birth and that uniquely affect the trajectory of the individual's physical, intellectual, and/or emotional development. Conditions can affect multiple body parts or systems. Intellectual disability is characterized by differences with both, intellectual functioning or intelligence and adaptive behavior. Developmental disability is a broader category of often lifelong challenges that can be intellectual, physical, or both.
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act	A federal law that makes available a free appropriate public education to eligible children with disabilities throughout the nation and ensures special education and related services to those children.
IEP	Individualized Education Program	An IEP is a plan for each child who qualifies for special education and related services that is developed, reviewed, and revised by the ARD committee, of which parents are active members. It includes the student's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, participation in state and district-wide assessments, transition services, annual goals, special factors, special education, related services, supplementary aids and services, extended school year services, and least restrictive educational setting.
IMPACT	Information Management Protecting Adults & Children in Texas	According to DFPS, IMPACT is the main application DFPS uses to record case information about the children and adults the agency protects. DFPS uses IMPACT to document all stages of service of a case, including when someone reports abuse, neglect, or exploitation and when those cases are investigated.
IOP	Intensive Outpatient Treatment	An addiction treatment program that is designated for participants to receive intensive drug treatment while living at home.

IV-E	Title IV-E	Title IV-E of the Social Security Act provides a federal funding stream to states for costs related to the provision of foster care, including costs related to legal representation of DFPS, parents, and children.
JMC	Joint Managing Conservatorship	A legal status that sets out shared rights and duties of a parent by two parties, ordinarily the parents, even if the exclusive right to make certain decisions are awarded to one party. <a href="#">Tex. Fam. Code § 101.016</a> . In DFPS cases, it is possible for a parent or a relative to share JMC of a child in the conservatorship of the Department.
JPO	Juvenile Probation Officer	Officers that provide supervision to some youth involved with juvenile justice system or dual status youth with child welfare and juvenile justice involvement.
LGBTQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Youth <a href="#">Webpage</a>	The Child Welfare Information Gateway webpage includes information about serving lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth, including resources for LGBTQ youth in out-of-home care and resources offering support and guidance for LGBTQ youth and their families.
LOC	Level of Care; <a href="#">Website</a>	There are five service levels of care for children in the conservatorship of DFPS. Those service levels are basic, moderate, specialized, intense, and intense plus. <a href="#">40 TAC Section 700.2301-700.2367</a> .
LPS	Local Permanency Specialist	DFPS changed the title for <i>I See You</i> staff to Local Permanency Specialist in 2017. The <i>I See You</i> worker for a child is officially called the Local Permanency Specialist (LPS); however, references to an <i>I See You</i> caseworker are still common. When a child who is in the conservatorship of DFPS is placed in an out-of-region placement, the region where the child is placed must provide the supervision and a portion of the case management services for the child. The Local Permanency Specialist provides these services, known as courtesy supervision. The CVS caseworker must request services and supervision by a LPS within seven days of the placement.
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding	An agreement between two parties in the form of a legal document. It is not fully binding in the way that a contract is, but it expresses an interest in performing a service or taking part in an activity.
MSA	Mediated Settlement Agreed	A form of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) that settles the case via negotiation under the guidance of a qualified neutral third party. An MSA is binding on the parties if properly executed, and a court may only decline to enter the MSA if a specific exception applies. <a href="#">Tex. Fam. Code § 153.007(c)-(e)</a> ; <a href="#">Tex. Fam. Code § 153.0071(e-1)</a> .
NCJFCJ	National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges; <a href="#">Website</a>	The mission of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges is to provide all judges, courts, and related agencies involved with juvenile, family, and domestic violence cases with the knowledge and skills to improve the lives of the families and children who seek justice.

NCSC	National Center for State Courts; <a href="#">Website</a>	The mission of NCSC is to improve the administration of justice through leadership and service to state courts, and courts around the world.
OAG	Office of the Attorney General; <a href="#">Website</a>	The Texas state agency that serves as legal counsel to all boards and agencies of state government; issues legal opinions when requested by the Texas Governor, heads of state agencies, and other officials and agencies as provided by Texas statutes; sits as an ex-officio member of state committees and commissions; and defends challenges to state laws and suits against both state agencies and individual employees of the State.
OCA	Office of Court Administration; <a href="#">Website</a>	The mission of OCA is to provide resources and information for the efficient administration of the Judicial Branch of Texas.
PAL	Preparation for Adult Living	A program within CPS to provide support and services to help youth prepare for independent adult living upon departure from DFPS' care and support. According to DFPS, PAL policy requires that youth 16 and older who are in substitute care and likely to remain in care until at least age 18, and who can qualify for services up to their 21st birthday receive services to prepare them for adult living. With funding availability, regions may serve any youth age 14 or older on whom Child Protective Services has an open case.
PC	Permanency Conference	A Permanency Conference is held when it is not possible or appropriate to hold a Family Group Conference and is held for a child or youth in DFPS conservatorship for the purposes of developing or reviewing the child's or youth's permanency plan; developing or reviewing the family service plan; resolving barriers to achieving a permanent living arrangement, as appropriate; and developing and reviewing the transition plan for youth age 14 and 15. Family Group Decision Making strategies are used, to the extent possible and appropriate to the situation.
PCSP	Parental Child Safety Placement; <a href="#">Resource Guide</a>	A family-initiated, temporary, out-of-home placement made by a parent with a caregiver who is either related to the child or has a long-standing and significant relationship with the child or family that may occur when the family determines that a PCSP is more workable than having a supervision agreement for parent-child contact.
PJMC	Permanent Joint Managing Conservatorship	A legal term under <a href="#">Tex. Fam. Code § 101.016</a> used in child custody cases to indicate the long-term sharing of the rights and duties of a parent by two parties, ordinarily the parents, even if the exclusive right to make certain decisions may be awarded to one party.
PMC	Permanent Managing Conservatorship	Placement of a child in the permanent conservatorship of an entity or person, by court order, (e.g., Texas DFPS or relative) with no intention of returning the child to the parent's custody. PMC is a term used solely in the context of child welfare law and is used to designate a managing conservator other than a parent. The designation of a non-parent as sole or joint managing conservator may be used in lieu of the term PMC.

QRTP	Qualified Residential Treatment Program	A childcare institution that has a treatment model as defined by the Family's First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA). Both accreditation of the facility and court review of the placement are required to qualify for federal IV-E matching payments after a child's placement in a QRTP by the court.
RAPR	Refusal to Assume Parental Responsibility	RAPR is characterized as the failure by the person responsible for a child's care, custody, or welfare to permit the child to return to the child's home without arranging for the necessary care for the child after the child has been absent from the home for any reason.
RSDI	Retirement, Survivors, and Disability Insurance	A federally funded program managed by the Social Security Administration. This program is for people who do not or cannot work anymore, and their spouse and dependents. To be eligible for RSDI payments, the person must have worked a minimum number of years (typical ten, but this can change on a case-by-case basis) and been paid Federal Insurance Contribution Act taxes during these years.
RO	Ruled Out	One of the possible dispositions given in a DFPS investigation of child abuse and neglect. For an investigation to be designated as Ruled Out, the information gathered during the investigation supports a reasonable conclusion that: 1) the alleged abuse did not occur; 2) the alleged perpetrator is 9 years old or younger; or 3) the alleged abuse or neglect did occur but there is sufficient evidence to reasonably conclude that the named alleged perpetrator is not responsible.
RTB	Reason to Believe	One of the possible dispositions given in a DFPS investigation of child abuse and neglect. For an investigation to be designated as Reason to Believe, the information gathered during the investigation supports a reasonable conclusion that the alleged abuse or neglect did occur and that the alleged perpetrator is responsible for it.
RTC	Residential Treatment Center	According to Texas HHS, an RTC provides therapeutic, residential care for children and adolescents to address needs such as mental illness, substance use or other behavioral health problems. Children and adolescents live in an RTC for a short period of time as they work to meet their treatment goals.
SACWIS	Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System	The comprehensive automated case management tool that meets the needs of all staff (including social workers and their supervisors, whether employed by the State, county, or contracted private providers) involved in foster care and adoptions assistance case management. In Texas, the SACWIS system is called IMPACT.
SAPCR	Suit Affecting Parent-Child Relationship	Any lawsuit that affects the parent-child relationship, such as conservatorship of a child that has allegedly been abused or neglected by a parent or guardian.

SIJS	Special Immigrant Juvenile Status	An immigration classification which allows immigrant children in the state child welfare system who cannot reunify with their parents due to abuse, abandonment, or neglect, and who meet certain other criteria, to obtain lawful permanent immigration status.
SMC	Sole Managing Conservator	An individual named by court order with the exclusive rights and duties of a parent to a child.
SPA	Regional Support Program Administrator	According to DFPS, CPS Service Program Administrators (SPAs) supervise program staff members who provide services and support to CPS staff and children and youth in substitute care. Their programs include, but are not limited to, education, developmental disabilities, and well-being.
SSI/SSDI	Supplemental Security Income/Supplemental Security Disability Income	The program that provides monthly payments to adults and children with a disability or blindness who have income and resources below specific financial limits. The SSDI program pays benefits to the disabled person and certain family members of the disabled person, if the person is “insured” meaning they worked long enough, recently enough, and paid Social Security taxes on their earnings.
SSCC	Single Source Continuum Contractor	A non-profit or governmental entity with child welfare as primary mission that contracts with DFPS to oversee delivery of services through the state’s community-based care foster care program. Per the <a href="#">DFPS Handbook</a> , the Single Source Continuum Contractors (SSCC) are responsible for implementing the Community Based Care (CBC) model for foster care services in their designated catchment areas. The implementation of CBC in each catchment area occurs in stages with increased responsibility assigned to the SSCC at each stage, requiring DFPS to assess risk and readiness on an ongoing basis prior to moving to the next stage.
TBRI®	Trust-Based Relational Intervention	Developed by Texas Christian University’s Institute of Child Development, TBRI employs evidence-based principles and practices to accelerate healing and speed to permanency for children in foster care.
TCIC	Texas Crime Identification Center	TCIC provides immediate access 24/7 to law enforcement agencies throughout Texas to data regarding the stolen status of property and the wanted, missing, sex offender, or protective order status of persons.
TEA	Texas Education Agency <a href="#">Website</a>	The state agency dedicated to elementary and secondary education.
TFC	Texas Family Code	The laws and statutes that govern Texas family law are contained in the TFC, including laws related to child welfare.

THECB	Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board <a href="#">Website</a>	The state agency with a mission is to provide leadership and coordination for Texas higher education and to promote access, affordability, quality, success, and cost efficiency through 60x30TX, resulting in a globally competitive workforce that positions Texas as an international leader.
TJMC	Temporary Joint Managing Conservatorship	A legal status that occurs when temporary managing conservatorship is granted to DFPS and the parent(s) or other person in a SAPCR where the state agency is a party to the lawsuit.
TMC	Temporary Managing Conservatorship	The awarding of conservatorship of a child to Texas DFPS. This may include children remaining in their home with orders from the court for particular requirements to ensure the safety of the child, or the removal of a child from the family for safety and well-being purposes.
TPM	Transition Plan Meeting	According to DFPS, a Transition Plan Meeting is held soon after a youth who has been removed from the home reaches age 14. A TPM tends to be a shorter and more DFPS-driven conference with fewer participants than a Circle of Support. A TPM is used as an alternative to the Circle of Support when youth do not desire one, or a Circle of Support cannot be convened.
TRCP	Texas Rules of Civil Procedure	The TRCP govern all civil lawsuits filed in Texas. They are designed to “obtain a just, fair, equitable and impartial adjudication of the rights of litigants under established principles of substantive law” and to provide for efficient disposition of cases.
UTC	Unable to Complete	For an investigation to be designated as UTC, the information gathered during the investigation supports a reasonable conclusion that the caseworker could not gather enough information because the caseworker could not locate a principal, or a principal was uncooperative.
UTD	Unable to Determine	UTD is one of the possible dispositions given in a DFPS investigation of child abuse and neglect. For an investigation to be designated as UTD, the information gathered during the investigation supports a reasonable conclusion that the allegation does not meet the criteria for unable to complete, but: 1) the information gathered is not enough to determine whether the abuse or neglect occurred; or 2) there is enough information to determine that abuse or neglect occurred, but there is not enough information to determine if the alleged perpetrator is responsible.

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Abbreviation	Definitions
ABAN	A case determination of Abandonment
EMAB	A case determination of Mental or Emotional Injury
MDNG	A case determination of Medical Neglect
NSUP	A case determination of Non-Support
NSUP	A case determination of Neglectful Supervision
PHAB	A case determination of Physical Abuse
PHNG	A case determination of Physical Neglect
RAPR	A case determination of Refusal to Assume Parental Responsibility
SXAB	A case determination of Sexual Abuse
SXTR	A case determination of Sex Trafficking





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# ENDNOTES

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- 1 CPS Policy Handbook § 2200. Available online at [http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS\\_pg\\_2200.asp](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_2200.asp). Last visited September 28, 2022.
- 2 DFPS Texas Abuse Hotline website. Available online at <https://www.txabusehotline.org/Login/Default.aspx>. Last visited September 28, 2022.
- 3 Interstate Compact on Placement of Children. Available online at <https://aphsa.org/AAICPC/default.aspx>. Last visited September 28, 2022.
- 4 CPS Policy Handbook § 6610. Available online at [https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS\\_pg\\_6600.asp](https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6600.asp). Last visited September 28, 2022.
- 5 *In the Interest of A.L.M.-F., A.M., J.A.-F., N.A.-F., and E.A.-F.*, No.170603
- 6 *Key W. Life Ins. Co. v. State Bd. of Ins.*, 350 S.W.2d 839, 846 (Tex. 1961) (defining “trial de novo” and describing its attributes); *Lone Star Gas Co. v. State*, 153 S.W.2d 681, 692 (Tex. 1941) (a trial de novo ordinarily requires the court to conduct a “full civil trial on the facts as well as the law” where the parties will “try the case as if the suit had been filed originally in that court”).
- 7 *In re A.L.M.-F* No 170603 at 8.
- 8 CPS Policy Handbook § 6251. Available online at [http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS\\_pg\\_6200.asp#CPS\\_6251](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_6200.asp#CPS_6251). Last visited on September 28, 2022.
- 9 HHS Ombudsman Foster Care Help webpage. Available online at <https://hhs.texas.gov/about-hhs/your-rights/ombudsman-foster-care-help>. Last visited September 28, 2022.
- 10 A Guide for Those “Aging Out” of Foster Care in Texas. Available online at <http://texasfosteryouth.org/>. Last visited September 28, 2022.
- 11 Extended Court Jurisdiction Flowchart. Available online at [http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child\\_Protection/Youth\\_and\\_Young\\_Adults/Transitional\\_Living/Extended\\_Foster\\_Care/documents/Extended\\_Court\\_Jurisdiction\\_Flow\\_Chart.pdf](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/Youth_and_Young_Adults/Transitional_Living/Extended_Foster_Care/documents/Extended_Court_Jurisdiction_Flow_Chart.pdf). Last visited September 28, 2022.
- 12 DFPS Transitional Living Services Handout. Available online at [https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child\\_Protection/Youth\\_and\\_Young\\_Adults/Transitional\\_Living/documents/Transitional\\_Living\\_Services\\_Handout.pdf](https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/Youth_and_Young_Adults/Transitional_Living/documents/Transitional_Living_Services_Handout.pdf). Last visited September 28, 2022.
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# CHARTS

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- JURISDICTION UNDER UNIFORM CHILD CUSTODY JURISDICTION AND ENFORCEMENT ACT (UCCJEA)
- JURISDICTION AND VENUE DECISIONS INVOLVING THE COURT OF CONTINUING, EXCLUSIVE JURISDICTION (CCEJ)
- EXTENDED COURT JURISDICTION FLOW CHART (Updated August 2022)
- EXTENDED JURISIDITION MATRIX
- COLLEGE PROGRAMS/RESOURCES FOR DFPS FOSTER YOUTH, ADOPTED YOUTH & CERTAIN YOUTH THAT EXIT TO A PARENT OR NON-PARENT OR ENTER THE PCA PROGRAM (September 2017)
- BRIEF OVERVIEW OF TRANSITIONAL LIVING SERVICES (September 2021)



# JURISDICTION UNDER THE UCCJEA

Child moves to Texas from State A with a parent before Texas CPS files child protection suit.

Under any circumstances, Texas courts have jurisdiction to enter temporary orders for the protection of a child, no matter what has previously transpired.

Texas court has EMERGENCY jurisdiction to render temporary protective orders  
Tex. Fam. Code §152.204

Does the other parent of the child continue to reside in State A?

YES NO

\* The Texas court has jurisdiction to make an initial child custody determination and may modify a custody determination from State A, when applicable.  
TFC §152.201-202

Is there a prior child custody order issued with proper jurisdiction by State A, or has state A commenced a child custody proceeding involving the same child?

YES NO

The Texas court shall immediately communicate with the court of the first state to resolve the emergency, protect the safety of the parties and the child and determine the duration of the temporary order.  
Tex. Fam. Code §152.203

Other state  
RETAINS DECLINES

Is Texas the "home state" of the child?  
TFC §152.102(7)

NO YES

A court exercising jurisdiction under Ch. 262 is not required to transfer the suit to a court in which a parent has filed suit for dissolution of marriage before a final order is rendered under Ch. 263, Subchapter E.  
TFC §262.203(c)

The Texas court may decline to exercise its jurisdiction at any time if it determines that it is an inconvenient forum and that a court of another state is a more appropriate forum.  
TFC §152.207

\* Unless an exception applies based on a party's assertion that the child is in Texas as a result of an abduction or other unjustifiable conduct. Tex. Fam. Code § 152.208.



## Jurisdiction and Venue Decisions Involving the Court of Continuing, Exclusive Jurisdiction

The court issues orders for the protection of the child under **Chapter 262**.

Is there a prior **final order** regarding this child in a different county?

Yes

No

The court that issued the final order has established **Continuing, Exclusive Jurisdiction**.  
TFC §155.001

Has the child resided in the current county for at least six months?

Yes

No

Transfer to the Ch. 262 court is **mandatory** and that court can order transfer from the CCEJ.  
  
TFC §§155.201(b); 262.203(a)(2)

Transfer to the Ch. 262 court is mandatory, if requested by the Ch 262 court TFC §262.203(a).  
  
CCEJ must transfer within 10 days.  
  
Ch 262 court may also transfer case to the CCEJ based on convenience of parties and best interest of child. §262.203(a)(1)

Is there a **pending suit** in another county regarding this child?

Yes

No

A motion to transfer and consolidation order is necessary.  
See TFC §§6.407; 155.202

The Ch. 262 court has jurisdiction to issue a final order.

If grounds exist for transfer based on improper venue, order transfer of the suit to the court having venue of the suit under Chapter 103.  
TFC § 262.203(a)(3)

**NOTE:**

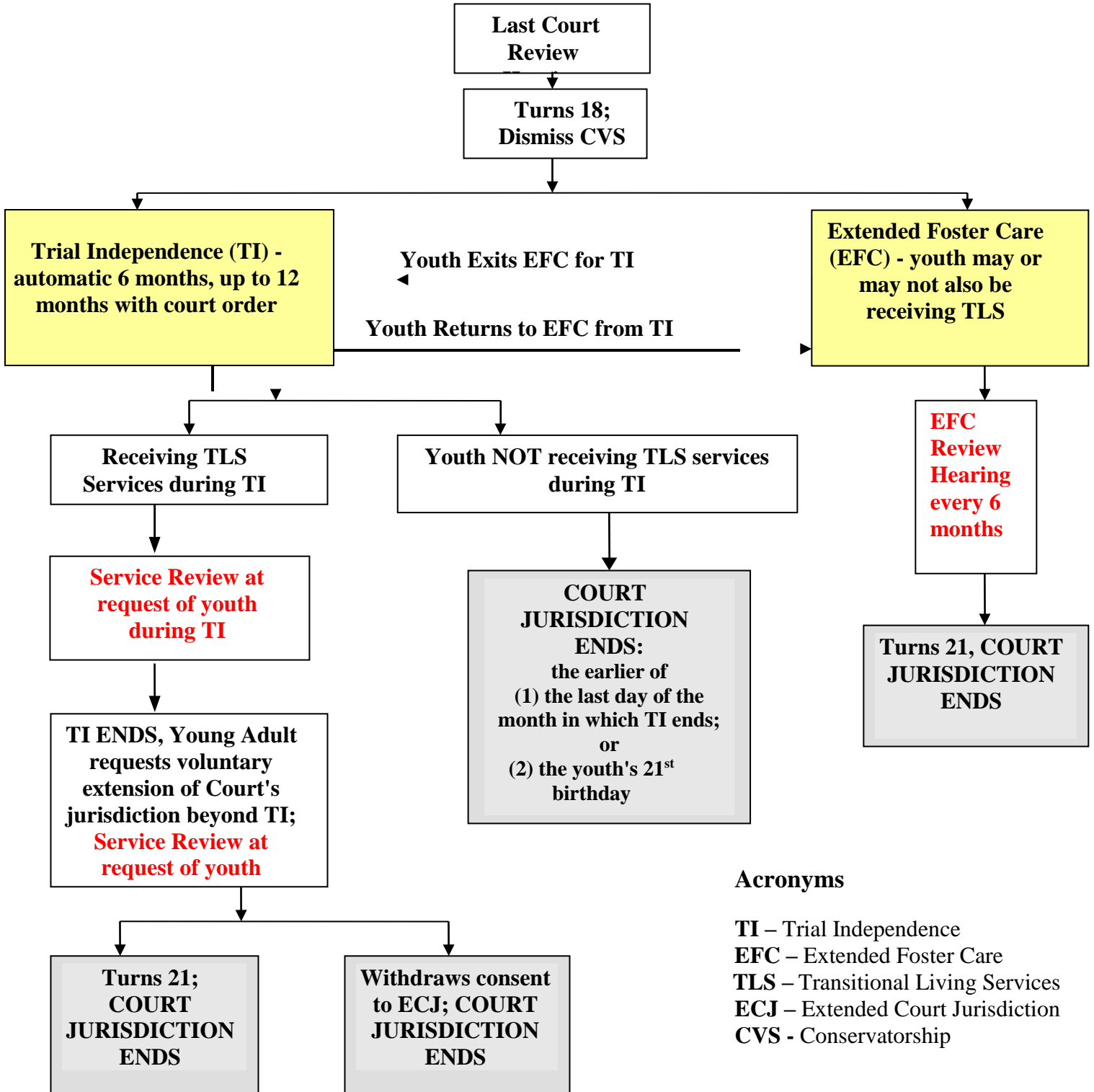
A dissolution filed *after* a DFPS SAPCR does not force transfer to the divorce court.

TFC § 262.203(c)





# EXTENDED COURT JURISDICTION FLOW CHART



### Acronyms

- TI – Trial Independence
- EFC – Extended Foster Care
- TLS – Transitional Living Services
- ECJ – Extended Court Jurisdiction
- CVS - Conservatorship



Texas Department of  
**Family and Protective Services**  
*Child Protective Services*

## **How Extended Court Jurisdiction (ECJ) works:**

When a youth turns 18, CPS conservatorship is dismissed. The youth can choose to either remain in Extended Foster Care, known as EFC, or can exit DFPS care to live independently, which is known as Trial Independence, or TI.

### **Path 1: Extended Foster Care (EFC)**

If the youth stays in EFC he may or may not be receiving TLS. In EFC a court review hearing is held every 6 months. A youth can exit EFC for TI at any time prior to age 21. The court's extended jurisdiction ends at age 21 for those who remain in EFC.

### **Path 2: Trial Independence (TI)**

If at age 18 the youth decides to not stay in EFC, he exits to TI which automatically extends up to 6 months; however, a court order can extend the TI up to 12 months. The youth can choose to return to EFC during the TI period or at any time before age 21. During TI, he may or may not use TLS.

### **Path 2: Trial Independence (TI) without Transitional Living Services (TLS)**

If the youth does not receive TLS, the court's jurisdiction ends when the youth's TI period ends or the youth's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, whichever is earlier.

### **Path 2: Trial Independence (TI) with Transitional Living Services (TLS)**

If the youth receives TLS during TI, the youth can request service reviews. When the youth's TI ends, the youth can request a voluntary extension of the court's jurisdiction beyond the TI period. If the court extends jurisdiction, the youth can also request service reviews during this time period as well. The court's jurisdiction ends when the youth turns 21, or before, if the youth withdraws consent to the court's extended jurisdiction.

# EXTENDED JURISDICTION MATRIX

Status of young adult who turned 18 in care	What criteria define this status?	Does the court have extended jurisdiction?	Is a court hearing required or optional during this status?*	Who is the CPS contact?	When does court's jurisdiction end?	Additional comments
<p><b>EXAMPLE 1.</b></p> <p>YA turns 18 and elects to <b>remain continuously in extended foster care (EFC)</b>, with no interruption in care.</p>	<p>Per §263.601(1), to be considered in EFC, the YA <i>must</i> be in a residential facility licensed or approved by DFPS, and paid for by DFPS; including foster homes, foster group homes, RTCs, and "Supervised Independent Living" providers who have a contract with DFPS for EFC. This does not include YAs living in State Supported Living Centers, HCS homes, with relatives, in a juvenile justice placement, or other settings not subject to DFPS regulation or payment.</p>	<p>Yes. Court jurisdiction is <i>mandatory</i> per §263.602(a) for as long as the YA remains in EFC, up to the YA's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.</p>	<p>Yes. Mandatory EFC review hearings * must be held every six months while YA is in EFC, similar to the placement review hearings conducted prior to the YA's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.</p> <p><i>* See §263.602(b)-(e), and discussion below chart for mandatory EFC review hearing/notice requirements.</i></p>	<p>The CVS** worker who was assigned before the YA turned 18.</p>	<p>Jurisdiction ends on the YA's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.</p> <p><i>But see</i> remaining examples for YAs who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• exit EFC before 21, with or without accessing transitional living services (TLS) (Examples 2 &amp; 3); or</li> <li>• exit EFC and later return to EFC before turning 21 (Example 4).</li> </ul>	<p>Extended jurisdiction and 6-month review hearings are required by Title IV-E of the Social Security Act for the state to receive federal reimbursement for the cost of EFC.</p> <p>To be <i>eligible</i> for EFC after age 18, the YA must meet eligibility criteria in 264.101 and related DFPS rules. YA can remain in EFC until last day of month YA turns 22 if still completing HS or GED; or until last day of month YA turns 21 under all other EFC eligibility criteria.</p>
<p><b>EXAMPLE 2.</b></p> <p>YA is in <b>trial independence (TI) and not receiving either EFC or TLS services from DFPS.</b></p>	<p>When a YA exits foster care/EFC on <i>or after</i> turning 18, the YA is automatically deemed to be in a mandatory TI status for a minimum period of 6 months, per §263.601(3-A), in conjunction with §263.602(f). No court order is required for the mandatory 6-month TI.</p> <p>Per the same provisions, the court <i>may</i>, in its discretion, order a longer TI period of up to a maximum of 12 months.</p>	<p>Yes. The court has mandatory extended jurisdiction during TI per §263.602(a) &amp; (f).</p>	<p>No. The court is not required to conduct any periodic hearings during TI, and may not compel the YA in TI status to attend a court hearing, per §263.602(g).</p>	<p>The CVS** worker who was assigned before the YA turned 18.</p>	<p>Jurisdiction ends at the end of the TI period unless, <i>prior to end of TI</i>, the YA accesses transitional living services (TLS) or returns to EFC, as described in EXAMPLES 3 &amp; 4, below.</p>	<p>YA in TI status is not, by definition, receiving EFC services. YA in TI status may, or may not, be receiving TLS while in TI status. If YA in TI is receiving TLS, see EXAMPLE 3.</p>
<p><b>EXAMPLE 3.</b></p> <p>YA exits foster care on <i>or after</i> turning 18, but <b>is receiving transitional living services (TLS).</b></p>	<p>On <i>or after</i> turning 18, a YA exits foster care/EFC, triggering the start of automatic TI status of 6 months (or a longer TI status of up to 12 months if the court orders a longer period of TI).</p> <p>Throughout TI, or at some point before the TI period ends, the YA accesses transitional living services (TLS) - either directly from the department or from a provider with whom DFPS contracts for TLS services.</p> <p>TLS services are defined in §264.121, and <i>includes</i> Preparation for Adult Living Services (PAL) and Education and Training Voucher (ETV) services.</p>	<p>Yes. The court has mandatory jurisdiction for as long as YA remains in TI status, per §263.602(a) &amp; (f).</p> <p>Court <i>may</i> extend jurisdiction beyond end of TI <i>if YA requests voluntary</i> extended jurisdiction, per §263.6021(a).</p>	<p>No. The court is not required to conduct any periodic hearings during TI, and may not compel the YA in TI status to attend a court hearing, per §263.602(g).</p> <p>However, YA <i>may</i> request <i>ad hoc</i> hearing to review delivery of TLS services. See §263.6021(c)-(e) and discussion below chart for voluntary hearing requirements. *</p>	<p>Until TI ends, the CVS** worker has primary responsibility. After TI ends, YA will only have a PAL** worker assigned.</p>	<p>Jurisdiction ends <i>on the earlier of</i> the date:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. TI period ends if YA did not request voluntary jurisdiction under §263.6021;</li> <li>B. If YA has requested voluntary extended jurisdiction, the court's jurisdiction ends when the YA withdraws consent to voluntary extended jurisdiction, per §263.6021(b); OR</li> <li>C. the YA's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.</li> </ol>	<p>Extended jurisdiction beyond the TI period to review TLS services delivery, as provided under §263.6021, is entirely voluntary on the part of the YA and the court.</p> <p>When jurisdiction is extended <i>voluntarily</i> under §263.6021, there are no mandatory, periodic review hearings required, as there are when YA is in EFC. Rather, under voluntary jurisdiction, the YA <i>may request</i> a hearing <i>as needed</i> to review the provision of TLS services. Such hearings are described in §263.6021(c)-(e), and are further described below this chart. *</p>

# EXTENDED JURISDICTION MATRIX

Status of young adult who turned 18 in care	What criteria define this status?	Does the court have extended jurisdiction?	Is a court hearing required or optional during this status?*	Who is the CPS contact?	When does court's Jurisdiction end?	Additional comments
<b>EXAMPLE 4.</b> YA exits foster care on or after turning 18, and later returns to EFC.	<p>A YA who was in DFPS conservatorship on the day before turning 18, may elect to leave foster care, but later elect to return to EFC before turning 21. A TI period of 6-12 months is triggered <i>each time a YA leaves foster care/EFC.</i></p> <p>Accordingly, when a YA returns to EFC - after having previously exited foster care/EFC – the YA may return:</p> <p>A. during TI, while court still has <i>mandatory</i> extended jurisdiction under 263.602(a);</p> <p>B. after TI has ended, but while court still has <i>voluntary</i> extended jurisdiction under 263.6021 (See Example 3); or</p> <p>C. after both mandatory and voluntary jurisdiction (if any) have ended.</p>	<p><b>Yes</b>, if YA returns to EFC before either mandatory jurisdiction (per 263.602) or voluntary jurisdiction (per 263.6021) ends, as described in the examples above. <b>No</b>, if YA returns to EFC care after mandatory or voluntary court jurisdiction ended.</p>	<p><b>Yes</b>, if the court did not lose jurisdiction before the YA returned to EFC, a review hearing should be held as soon as the YA returns, and every 6 months thereafter while the YA remains in EFC, per §263.602(b)-(e), and discussion at end of chart. *</p> <p><b>No</b>, if court had already lost jurisdiction before YA returned to care.</p>	A new CVS** worker will be assigned in the area where the YA is residing in EFC.	<p>Assuming jurisdiction had not been lost before the YA returned to EFC, jurisdiction ends <i>on the earlier of</i>:</p> <p>A. date of YA's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday</p> <p>B. if the YA leaves EFC before turning 21 and does not request voluntary jurisdiction as described in Example 3, date the TI period ends; or</p> <p>C. if, after YA exits EFC, the TI period ends and the YA obtained voluntary jurisdiction, jurisdiction ends when YA withdraws consent to jurisdiction.</p>	<p>If YA leaves foster care on or after turning 18 and does not return to care before the court's jurisdiction ends under the provisions of Subchapter G, Ch. 263, there is no provision in Subchapter G for the court to regain jurisdiction. Each court will have to determine whether there is a legal basis for establishing jurisdiction for a YA who later returns to EFC or resumes receiving TLS services after jurisdiction has ended.</p> <p>All costs of EFC for a YA who returns to EFC after a TI period ends will be state-paid, with no federal reimbursement to the state.</p>
<b>EXAMPLE 5.</b> YA is not in EFC, TI has ended, and YA has not requested voluntary jurisdiction to review TLS, but YA is pending a referral to DADS for guardianship services.	<p>YA was in DFPS conservatorship on 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, and DFPS has made a referral to DADS for possible guardianship services. For purposes of this example, YA is not in EFC or TI, and therefore not subject to mandatory jurisdiction under § 263.602(a); nor has YA requested voluntary jurisdiction to review transitional living services, as provided under §263.6021(a).</p> <p>This scenario should very rarely occur, as most guardianship referrals will be resolved before EFC or TI status ends.</p>	<p><b>Perhaps.</b> Court may, on its own motion, extend jurisdiction pending the outcome of the DADS guardianship referral, per §263.603.</p>	No hearing is required pending outcome of DADS guardianship referral.	The YA's CVS worker remains responsible, pending the outcome of a referral to DADS.	<p>Jurisdiction ends when:</p> <p>A. DADS or Probate Court denies guardianship; or</p> <p>B. Guardian is appointed, unless guardian should request voluntary jurisdiction to review TLS.</p> <p>See §263.603</p>	<p>DFPS does not consider a YA in guardianship to be in EFC, regardless of where placed, because DFPS no longer has "placement and care" responsibility over the YA.</p> <p>If a guardian is appointed before court loses jurisdiction, the guardian may request voluntary continuation of jurisdiction, as provided under 263.604, in conjunction with 263.6021, to review TLS provided to YA/ward.</p>

\* **What kinds of hearings are required after age 18?** There are two types of hearings per Subchapter G, Chapter 263, depending upon a YA's status at the time of the hearing:

- (1) If the YA is in EFC, and the court has not yet lost jurisdiction under any of the provisions of Subchapter G, the court **MUST** continue to conduct mandatory review hearings, at least every 6 months, and make findings similar to those required for children under 18. The YA's CVS worker will continue to file a "plan of service" and court report with the court for purposes of the EFC review hearing, and notice of the EFC review hearing must be provided to the YA, DFPS, the YA's placement provider, any parent of the YA still involved in the YA's life, and any *ad litem*/CASA still appointed to the case. See hearing requirements in §263.602 (b)-(e).
- (2) If the YA is no longer in EFC, but is accessing TLS services and the court has not lost jurisdiction under any of the provisions of Subchapter G, the court *may*, *at the YA's request*, schedule a hearing as needed to review the provision of TLS services to the YA. This type of voluntary hearing has no special notice requirements and is conducted only when the YA requests the hearing. There is no "plan of service" for a YA who is not in EFC, however, CPS will file a court report describing the TLS services the YA is receiving. See hearing requirements in §263.6021(c)-(e).

\*\* **Who in CPS has primary responsibility for reporting to the court after age 18?** The CVS worker is the YA's conservatorship worker. This worker has primary responsibility for preparing court reports and attending court while a YA is receiving EFC services or in TI status. The CVS worker should coordinate with the YA's PAL worker to obtain additional information regarding TLS the YA may be accessing. The PAL worker has primary responsibility for reporting to the court for YAs who are no longer in EFC or TI, as there will no longer be a "conservatorship" worker assigned to such YA by DFPS. When unable to contact the YA's CVS or PAL worker, questions may be routed to the CPS CVS Program Administrator or to the Regional Attorney.

**Can a young adult have more than one TI period?** Yes. Nothing in Subchapter G, Ch 263, TFC, limits a YA to only one TI period; a new TI period begins any time a YA exists foster care. For example, a YA may attend college and live in a dormitory during the school year, under a 12 month TI period. Prior to expiration of TI, the YA may return to EFC during the summer break, and again exit EFC to return to school. A YA may enter a new period of TI for up to 12 months, which preserves extended court jurisdiction and federal funding should the YA return to EFC the following summer – up to age 21.



## COLLEGE PROGRAMS/RESOURCES FOR DFPS FOSTER YOUTH, ADOPTED YOUTH & CERTAIN YOUTH THAT EXIT TO A PARENT OR NON-PARENT OR ENTER THE PCA PROGRAM-September 2017

What is the STATE COLLEGE AND TUITION WAIVER?	What is the EDUCATION AND TRAINING VOUCHER (ETV) program?	What OTHER DFPS EDUCATION RESOURCES are available?
<p>The waiver provides exemption of tuition and fees at Texas public institutions of higher education for youth formerly in Department of Family &amp; Protective Services (DFPS) conservatorship, adopted youth, and certain other youth. Students must enroll in a state supported school or a dual credit course by their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday.</p>	<p>The federal ETV program may provide <u>up to</u> \$5,000 an academic year to eligible students for college related expenses including rent, books, utilities, childcare, computers, personal expenses, transportation and tuition, if applicable. Funds awarded are based on the college's estimated cost of attendance.</p>	<p>The federal <b>Preparation For Adult Living (PAL) Services</b> program assists older youth in foster care and former foster youth to prepare to transition to a successful adulthood.</p>
<p><b>Who is Eligible?</b> All individuals in DFPS Conservatorship (substitute care) in one of the circumstances listed below.</p> <p><i>FOSTER YOUTH:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the day preceding the student's 18th birthday;</li> <li>the day of the student's 14th birthday, if also eligible for adoption on or after that day;</li> <li>the date the student graduates from high school or receives the equivalent of a high school diploma.</li> </ul> <p><i>RETURN TO THE LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY OF A PARENT:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>if a youth was age 14 and older on or after June 1, 2016 and in DFPS's Permanent Managing Conservatorship (PMC); OR</li> <li>if a youth was age 16 or older on or after June 1, 2016 and was in DFPS's Temporary Managing Conservatorship (TMC).</li> </ul> <p><i>PMC TO A NON-PARENT:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PMC was granted to a non-parent on or after September 1, 2009.</li> </ul> <p><i>ADOPTED YOUTH:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>adoption occurred on or after September 1, 2009; OR</li> <li>adopted and the subject of an adoption assistance agreement for monthly financial assistance and Medicaid. (No age limit for college enrollment for these students.)</li> </ul> <p><i>DUAL CREDIT COURSES</i> Students can use the waiver to enroll in a dual credit course that offers joint high school and college credit.</p>	<p><b>Who is Eligible?</b> All individuals in DFPS Conservatorship (substitute care) in one of the circumstances listed below.</p> <p><i>FOSTER YOUTH:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>who are at least 16 and likely to remain in care until 18; or</li> <li>who age out foster care but are not yet 21.</li> </ul> <p><i>YOUTH WHO ENTER PERMANENCY CARE ASSISTANCE (PCA):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>not yet age 21 and entered the PCA program after age 16</li> </ul> <p><i>ADOPTED YOUTH:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>not yet age 21 and are adopted after turning age 16</li> </ul> <p><i>OTHER:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Texas Juvenile Justice Department - youth must be in the custody of or under the jurisdiction of a local juvenile probation department AND were in a Title IV-E placement receiving Title IV-E payments on the day they turn 18.</li> <li>Tribal youth in tribal foster care</li> </ul> <p><i>Students age 21 up to age 23:</i> An eligible student who has participated in, applied for and been approved for ETV before his/her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday may remain eligible until the month of their 23<sup>rd</sup> birthday as long as they are continuously enrolled and making satisfactory academic progress toward completion of their school approved degree or certificate program.</p> <p><i>*Note:</i> Undocumented youth are not eligible for ETV.</p>	<p><b>Who is Eligible?</b> Youth in DFPS paid substitute care are the priority population for PAL services.</p> <p><i>FOSTER YOUTH/YOUNG ADULTS:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>who are at least age 16 or older and likely to remain in foster care until at least age 18.</li> <li>may qualify for PAL services up to their 21st birthday.</li> </ul> <p><b>PAL Benefits/Services:</b> <u>Transitional Living Allowance</u> - Up to \$1,000 and must meet the qualification requirements to include completion of PAL Life Skills Training.</p> <p><u>Aftercare Room and Board Assistance</u> - Based on need and emergency, up to \$500 a month (not to exceed \$3,000 of accumulated payments) and have been in DFPS paid care at age 18 and meet qualification requirements.</p> <p><u>Other</u> - Independent living skills training, support services as needed (i.e., counseling, driver education).</p> <p>PAL Staff Contact List: <a href="http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/Youth_and_Young_Adults/Preparation_For_Adult_Living/PAL_coordinators.asp">http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/Youth_and_Young_Adults/Preparation_For_Adult_Living/PAL_coordinators.asp</a></p>



## COLLEGE PROGRAMS/RESOURCES FOR DFPS FOSTER YOUTH, ADOPTED YOUTH & CERTAIN YOUTH THAT EXIT TO A PARENT OR NON-PARENT OR ENTER THE PCA PROGRAM-September 2017

What schools, programs, and courses can be used with the STATE COLLEGE AND TUITION WAIVER?	What schools, programs, and courses can be used with the EDUCATION AND TRAINING VOUCHER Program?	What other DFPS SCHOLARSHIPS may be available?
<p>Eligible students can attend any <b>Texas state-supported</b> colleges and universities, including public medical school, public dental schools, or public technical institutes.</p> <p><b>GENERAL INFORMATION:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fees are waived if required for education purposes (i.e., lab or other mandatory fees).</li> <li>• skills training programs offered at community and technical colleges must be funded with state formula funds to be eligible for the tuition waiver.</li> <li>• DFPS PAL or Adoption Eligibility staff verify eligibility for the waiver letter (Form 1003). Students submit the waiver letter when registering for school.</li> <li>• Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THCEB) offer outreach programs to ensure that foster youth in grades 9-12 are aware of the tuition and fee waiver.</li> </ul> <p>As of January 1, 2016 each state college/university now has a <b>Foster Care Student Liaison</b> to help former foster youth access services and receive assistance. <a href="#">Foster Care Student Liaison List</a></p> <p>The <a href="#">Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board</a> provides helpful information needed for youth/young adults to plan for college at <a href="http://www.collegeforalltexas.com/">http://www.collegeforalltexas.com/</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply Texas - College Application <a href="https://www.applytexas.org/adappc/gen/c_start.WBX">https://www.applytexas.org/adappc/gen/c_start.WBX</a></li> <li>• Compare Colleges Texas (2 and 4 year schools) <a href="http://comparecollegetx.com/">http://comparecollegetx.com/</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Statutory Citation:</b> Texas Education Code §§54.366, 54.367, 40 Texas Administrative Code §700.1630.</p>	<p>Eligible students can attend an *accredited or pre-accredited <b>private, public or non-profit</b> institution of higher education that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provides a bachelor's degree or not less than a two-year program that provides credit towards a degree or certification; or</li> <li>• provides not less than a one-year program of training to prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation; or</li> <li>• offers training programs and have been in existence for at least two years preparing students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation (training may be less than a year).</li> </ul> <p>Students must enroll in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• at least 6 semester hours; or</li> <li>• 3 semester hours if enrolled in a summer session or a dual college credit course.</li> </ul> <p><b>Correspondence, Distance Education, or Continuing Education</b> courses are allowed if part of a student's academic degree or certificate program. Prior approval by the ETV staff is needed to ensure proper school accreditation and course qualifications.</p> <p>Students apply at: <a href="http://www.texasetv.com">www.texasetv.com</a> or call <b>1-877-268-4063</b>.</p> <p>More information about these college programs is available at the <b>Texas Youth Connection</b> website: <a href="https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/txyouth/education/paying_for_college.asp">https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/txyouth/education/paying_for_college.asp</a></p> <p><b>*Note:</b> all of the schools/programs listed above must be accredited or have been granted pre-accreditation status by an agency or organization that has been recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education.</p> <p><b>Statutory Citation:</b> P.L. 110-351, 42 U.S.C. §677, 40 Texas Administrative Code §700.1613</p>	<p>If a youth/young adult aged out of DFPS foster care, completed the PAL life skills training program, and met other requirements they may be eligible for scholarships. These funds can be used to supplement any school expenses not covered by the ETV program, scholarships, or federal grants.</p> <p><b><u>DFPS SCHOLARSHIPS:</u></b></p> <p><b>Freshmen Success Fund for Foster Youth (est. April 2013):</b> This is a one-time grant of \$1,000 available for first time college freshmen formerly in DFPS foster care. These grants must cover basic, non-tuition related expenses such as books and supplies, computers and software, tools and uniforms, and transportation. Students must be enrolled in a Texas state-supported college, university, or vocational school that accepts the tuition and fee waiver.</p> <p><b>C. Ed Davis-PAL Scholarship (est. July 2012):</b> This scholarship is for basic, non-tuition needs for former foster youth who are majoring in government, political science, history, or other pre-law field. Scholarships are for \$1,000 per academic year and are available to sophomore, junior, or senior year students.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Scholarships received may affect the amount of ETV funds to be awarded because they are factored in with other sources of funds received by the student.</p> <p>More information is available at the <b>Texas Youth Connection</b> website: <a href="https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/txyouth/education/scholarships.asp">https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/txyouth/education/scholarships.asp</a></p>



## BRIEF OVERVIEW OF TRANSITIONAL LIVING SERVICES

Revised **September 2021**

**TRANSITIONAL LIVING SERVICES** PROVIDE A MULTIPURPOSE, SYSTEMIC AND INTEGRATED APPROACH FOR YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS TO HELP IN TRANSITIONING TO A SUCCESSFUL ADULTHOOD THROUGH COORDINATED PERMANENCY AND TRANSITION PLANNING. THE PROVISION OF **TRANSITIONAL LIVING SERVICES** INCLUDES ACCESS TO INFORMATION ABOUT BENEFITS, SUPPORTS, AND RESOURCES THAT AFFECT BOTH OLDER YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE AND THOSE WHO HAVE AGED OUT OF FOSTER CARE. **TRANSITIONAL LIVING SERVICES** APPLY TO YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT'S AGES 14 UP TO AGE 23 (DEPENDING ON THE PROGRAM) AND UP TO AGE 26 FOR CONTINUOUS HEALTHCARE COVERAGE.

### **Experiential Life Skills Training**

Foster parents and other providers are required to train youth age **14** and older in life skills through practical activities such as meal preparation, nutrition education and cooking, use of public transportation when appropriate, financial literacy training to include money management, credit history, balancing a checkbook and performing basic household tasks. If a youth has a source of income the provider will assist in establishing a savings account for the youth. In addition, foster parents and providers must connect youth and young adults to community resources such post-secondary education; employment; and vocational/technical school opportunities. These life skills activities provided by the caregiver along with the receipt of PAL services should complement one another and are discussed and addressed in each core life skill area within the youth's plan of service and transition plan. [http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS\\_pg\\_x10000.asp#CPS\\_10111](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_x10000.asp#CPS_10111)

### **ACCESS Granted-Texas Foster Care Handbook**

This handbook helps children and youth in foster care to better understand how the foster care system works and to address many of the questions and concerns they have regarding foster care. It provides information in an understandable manner on topics such as the CPS chain of command, the rights of children/youth while in foster care, health passport, the education portfolio, transition plans and Transitional Living Services. <https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/txyouth/documents/foster-care-handbook.pdf>

### **Planning for a Youth's Transition to a Successful Adulthood**

By participating in reviews of the Child's Plan of Service, and by participating in permanency planning meetings such as Circles of Support and permanency conferences, youth help in the development of their service plans. The Child's Plan of Service identifies steps, connections, and services for each youth that help them accomplish goals to assist them in obtaining positive permanency and in transitioning to a successful adulthood. Identifying caring adults for youth and involving them in service planning helps to ensure personal and community connections are incorporated into the service planning process. Planning for the transition to a successful adulthood continues to be conducted for those young adults in the Extended Foster Care program. [https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/cps/files/CPS\\_pg\\_1120.asp](https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/cps/files/CPS_pg_1120.asp)

### **Circle of Support (COS)**

A COS is a youth driven process beginning at **16** years of age (or as early as age **14** in some cases) and may take the place of the required permanency planning meetings as a means of developing a transition plan. The COS is facilitated by the family conference specialist. The COS is coordinated with participants that a youth identifies as "caring adults" who make up their support system. COS participants can include a youth's birth family members, foster care providers, teachers, church members, mentor and so on. Participants meet to develop and review the youth's permanency and transition plan, identify strengths, goals and needs in the areas of permanency, education, employment, health/mental health needs, housing, and PAL life skills training components

[https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child\\_Protection/Youth\\_and\\_Young\\_Adults/Transitional\\_Living/circles\\_of\\_support.asp](https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/Youth_and_Young_Adults/Transitional_Living/circles_of_support.asp)

### **OTHER INFORMATION-Under 18:**

**FOSTER CARE OMBUDSMAN-(1-844-286-0769)** is an HHSC position that will investigate complaints and possible rights violations of children and youth in foster care under age 18. The Ombudsman ensures that youth understand their rights while in foster care; reviews a youth's concerns about case specific questions and complaints; and with a youth's permission work with other people to improve their care. Complaints are kept confidential without threat of retaliation. [hhs.texas.gov/foster-care-help](https://hhs.texas.gov/foster-care-help)

### **Medical Consent**

A youth in foster care who is at least **16** years old may consent to receiving medical care if the court with continuing jurisdiction determines that the youth has the capacity to consent to medical care. Caregivers are required to advise youth of their right to request to become their own medical consenters.

[https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS\\_pg\\_x11000.asp](https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_x11000.asp)



## BRIEF OVERVIEW OF TRANSITIONAL LIVING SERVICES

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### Driver License or State Identification Card Fee Waiver

Driver license and State Identification Card fees are waived for youth in DFPS temporary or permanent managing conservatorship and for young adults at least **18** years of age, but younger than age **21**, who reside in a DFPS **paid** foster care placement.

[http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Resource\\_Guides/Driver\\_Licenses\\_for\\_Youth\\_in\\_Conservatorship\\_Resource\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Resource_Guides/Driver_Licenses_for_Youth_in_Conservatorship_Resource_Guide.pdf)

### Credit Reports

Every youth in the conservatorship of DFPS age **14** up to age **18** are informed that a credit report is run annually, until discharged from DFPS care. In addition to ensuring that the youth is notified that a report was run, the caseworker will explain the credit report and the importance of maintaining good credit. A young adult in Extended Foster care requests their own report at <https://www.annualcreditreport.com/index.action>.

[http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Resource\\_Guides/Personal\\_Documents\\_Resource\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Resource_Guides/Personal_Documents_Resource_Guide.pdf)

### Provision of Personal Documents/Records-Ages 16 and 18

Age **16**-Youth in DFPS conservatorship on or before they turn age 16 must be provided with a copy or original document of a:

- birth certificate; and
- Social Security card or replacement Social Security card, as appropriate; and
- Personal identification certificate/card issued by the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS).

Age **18**-Young Adults who age out DFPS foster care will receive either a copy or original personal documents (if not already provided) and other information. These include:

- A birth certificate;
- A Social Security card or a replacement Social Security card;
- A personal state identification certificate/card issued by DPS;
- Immunization records;
- Information contained in the youth's health passport;
- Proof of enrollment in Medicaid, if appropriate;
- Medical Power of Attorney Information-Forms 2559 A and B
- *Almost 18 Letter*; and
- Youth Transition Portfolio

[http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Resource\\_Guides/Personal\\_Documents\\_Resource\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Resource_Guides/Personal_Documents_Resource_Guide.pdf)

A young adult may request copies of these documents and other personal CPS records from *DFPS Records Management*. Information on how to make record requests is at: [https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/txyouth/legal/personal\\_docs.asp](https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/txyouth/legal/personal_docs.asp)

## INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES/PROGRAMS

### Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) Program

The PAL program assists older youth in foster care prepare for their departure and transition to a successful adulthood. Supportive services and benefits are provided by PAL Staff or PAL Contract Providers to eligible young adults up to age **21** to become self-sufficient and productive. PAL is funded by the *federal Chafee Foster Care Independence Program*, State general revenue funds and/or community match (20%).

[https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS\\_pg\\_x10200.asp](https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_x10200.asp)

PAL services include:

- **Life skills assessment** (Casey Life Skills Assessment) to assess strength and needs in life skills attainment [www.caseylifeskills.org](http://www.caseylifeskills.org) (assessments are conducted before Life skills training);
- **Life skills training** (age **16 to 18**) in the following core areas:
  - Health and Safety;
  - Housing and Transportation;
  - Job Readiness;
  - Financial Management;
  - Life Decisions/Responsibility;
  - Personal/Social Relationships
  - Educational/vocational services





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- **Supportive services** (based on need and funding availability) may include:
  - graduation items,
  - counseling,
  - tutoring,
  - driver's education fees, or
  - mentoring.
- A **transitional living allowance** of up to \$1,000 is distributed in increments of up to \$500 per month, for young adults up to age 21 who participated in PAL training, to help with initial start-up costs in adult living.
- **Aftercare room and board assistance** (ages 18-21) is based on need of up to \$500 per month for rent, utilities, utility deposits, food, etc. (not to exceed \$3,000 of accumulated payments per young adult).
- **Transitional & Financial Support Services** to help young adults with self-sufficiency, planning, and resource coordination in supporting successful transitions to adulthood. Services include pre-transitional support services prior to aging out, and transitional support services after a young adult has aged out and left care.

\*\*\*Contact Regional PAL Staff for more information about all Transitional Living Services at:

[http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child\\_Protection/Youth\\_and\\_Young\\_Adults/Preparation\\_For\\_Adult\\_Living/PAL\\_coordinators.asp](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/Youth_and_Young_Adults/Preparation_For_Adult_Living/PAL_coordinators.asp)

### Extended Foster Care Program

With the implementation of the federal **Fostering Connections Act** (*Title IV-E of the Social Security Act*), a young adult who ages out of foster care at age 18 is eligible for Extended Foster Care provided there is an available placement, the young adult signs a voluntary extended foster care agreement and meets at least one of the following conditions:

18 up to 22 year olds, and:

- regularly attending high school or enrolled in a program leading toward a high school diploma or school equivalence certificate (GED); or is

18 up to 21 years old and;

- regularly attending an institution of higher education or a post-secondary vocational or technical program (minimum six hours per semester); or
- actively participating in a program or activity that promotes, or removes barriers to, employment;
- employed for at least 80 hours per month; or
- incapable of doing any of the above due to a documented medical condition.

**For more information about Extended Foster Care Go to:**

[https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS\\_pg\\_x10400.asp](https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_x10400.asp)

### Supervised Independent Living (SIL) Program

The SIL program is a component of the Extended Foster Care program and allows young adults to live independently under a minimally supervised living arrangement provided by a DFPS contracted provider. A young adult in SIL is not supervised 24-hours a day and is allowed increased responsibilities, such as managing their own finances, buying groceries/personal items, and working with a landlord. Living arrangements may include apartments, non-college and college dorm settings, shared housing and host home settings. Individuals are assisted in transitioning to independent living, achieving identified education and employment goals, accessing community resources, engaging in needed life skills trainings, and establishing important relationships. Young adults must apply for and be accepted into the SIL program.

**For more information about SIL go to:**

[https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child\\_Protection/Youth\\_and\\_Young\\_Adults/Transitional\\_Living/Extended\\_Foster\\_Care/SIL\\_Contracted\\_Providers.asp](https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/Youth_and_Young_Adults/Transitional_Living/Extended_Foster_Care/SIL_Contracted_Providers.asp)

### Return for the Extended Foster Care Program

Young adults who aged out of DFPS conservatorship may return at any time up until the age of 21 to participate in the Extended Foster Care Program if the required stipulations are met:

- Is offered an available placement;
- Understand that court jurisdiction will be extended, if the court permits;
- Sign or re-sign a Voluntary Extended Foster Care agreement; and
- Agrees to meet one of the criteria described in the Extended Foster Care program within 30 days of being placed.

PAL staff pre-screen young adults who want to return for Extended Foster Care and refer to the regional re-entry staff.

### Regional Re-entry Staff Contact List-

[https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child\\_Protection/Youth\\_and\\_Young\\_Adults/Transitional\\_Living/Extended\\_Foster\\_Care/Re-entry\\_Liaisons.asp](https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/Youth_and_Young_Adults/Transitional_Living/Extended_Foster_Care/Re-entry_Liaisons.asp)



## BRIEF OVERVIEW OF TRANSITIONAL LIVING SERVICES

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### OTHER RELATED INFORMATION

#### **Trial Independence Period (TI)**

A young adult in DFPS conservatorship who turns 18 as well as a young adult enrolled in the Extended Foster Care Program may leave foster care for a "trial independence" period of 6 months (or up to 12 months with a court order). During the TI period, the young adult may be living independently and receiving other transitional living benefits such as PAL, ETV, and Texas Medicaid.

#### **Extended Court Jurisdiction**

Young adults that leave foster care at age 18 for a TI period will have court jurisdiction extended for 6 months. Additionally court jurisdiction may be extended for a 12 month TI period if ordered by the court. If a young adult is in Extended Foster Care, court jurisdiction will continue during this period but will not exceed the month of their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.

[https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS\\_pg\\_5600.asp](https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_5600.asp)

### POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION INFORMATION

#### **Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program**

ETV (Chafee) is a *federally-funded* program administered by DFPS. Based on the cost of attendance as established by higher education, youth and young adult's ages 16 up to the age of 23 may be eligible to receive up to \$5,000 in financial assistance per year to help them reach their postsecondary education goals providing they are eligible for ETV and meet the criteria:

- Have a high school diploma or GED or be exempt from required school attendance; or
- The student is enrolled in a dual-credit course or other course at an institution of higher education for which the student will earn a high school diploma and college credit.

#### **Individuals eligible for ETV include:**

- Youth in DFPS foster care who are at least **16** and likely to remain in care until **18**, or are in extended foster care; or
- Youth who aged out of DFPS foster care but have not yet turned **23**; or
- Youth who were adopted from DFPS foster care after turning age **16** and are not yet **23**; or
- Youth who enter Permanency Care Assistance after turning age **16** and are not yet age **23**; or
- Youth who are in the custody of the Texas Juvenile Justice Department (formerly TJJC) or under the jurisdiction of a local juvenile probation department and were receiving Title IV-E foster care payments the day before turning age **18** and who are not yet age **23**; or
- Tribal youth or young adults in tribal foster care and who are not yet age **25**; or
- The above eligible students who move out of state to attend school and were originally enrolled in ETV in Texas and who are not yet age **23**.
- The above eligible students cannot receive ETV funds for more than **5** years (whether or not consecutive). Texas defines **5** years as **15** semesters.

**ETV program participation requirements**-Students must apply for and be approved for ETV, meet school enrollment requirements, and be enrolled in at least 6 semester hours in an *accredited or pre-accredited* public or private, non-profit program/institution that:

- provides a bachelor's degree or not less than a 2 year program that provides credit towards a degree or certification; or
- provides not less than a one-year program of training to prepare students for gainful employment; or
- has been in existence for two years and offers training programs to prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation (training may be less than one year).

Students - remain eligible until the month of their 23<sup>th</sup> birthday as long as they are enrolled in ETV and are meeting the satisfactory academic progress policies toward completing their postsecondary education or training program as determined by the institution of higher education.

Students interested in specific educational programs through *Correspondence Courses, Distance Education Courses, or Continuing Education* courses must contact ETV staff for prior approval to ensure proper school accreditation and that courses lead to a degree or recognized certificate program. Courses must apply to a Student's academic degree or certificate program.



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**Note:** Youth or young adults in DFPS **paid** foster care, enrolled in higher education and eligible for ETV may have certain expenses paid by the ETV program (ex., books, computers, child care, and transportation). ETV will not cover residential housing, personal items and food since this is provided for in the placement.

[https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child\\_Protection/Youth\\_and\\_Young\\_Adults/Education/ETV.asp](https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/Youth_and_Young_Adults/Education/ETV.asp)

Apply for the ETV Program at: <http://www.texasetv.com> or call toll free 877-268-4063.

### College Tuition and Fee Waiver

The college tuition and fee waiver provides exemptions from payment of tuition and fees at a Texas **state supported college or university** to individuals formerly in **Texas** state foster care and adopted youth. To be exempt from the payment of tuition and fees, youth or young adults must have been in DFPS conservatorship:

- the day before the student's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday;
- the day of the student's 14<sup>th</sup> birthday, if the youth was eligible for adoption (parental rights terminated) on or after that day;
- the day the student graduated from high school or received the equivalent of a high school diploma;
- on the day preceding the date the youth was adopted and the adoption occurred on or after September 1, 2009;
- on the day preceding the date permanent managing conservatorship (PMC) of the youth was granted to a non-parent if that date was on or after September 1, 2009.
  
- In addition the following youth are eligible for the tuition and fee waiver: if a youth in DFPS conservatorship was returned to the legal responsibility of the parent at:
  - age 14 and older on or after June 1, 2016 and was in DFPS's *permanent* managing conservatorship; or
  - age 16 and older on or after June 1, 2016 and was in DFPS's *temporary* managing conservatorship; or
- when a student is enrolled in a dual credit course or other courses in which the student may earn joint high school and college credit and if tuition hasn't been waived. *Note: Youth enrolled in a dual credit course may enroll in the ETV program to have some education expenses covered.*

Youth or young adults must check with each school to ensure that the courses they are enrolling in are exempt from tuition and fees. Some vocational / certificate courses may not be exempt from tuition and fees. Young adults must be enrolled in a Texas state supported college or university **no later than their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday**.

*Adopted youth* who are subject to an adoption assistance agreement that provides monthly stipends and Medicaid benefits are eligible for the college tuition and fee waiver. For these students there is no age limit to enroll in college in order to take advantage of the tuition and fee waiver.

[https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child\\_Protection/Youth\\_and\\_Young\\_Adults/Education/state\\_college\\_tuition\\_waiver.asp](https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/Youth_and_Young_Adults/Education/state_college_tuition_waiver.asp)

Reference the *Texas Education Code*-Sec. 54.366 and 54.367 (2009) and Section 700.1630, Subchapter P of the Texas Administrative Code (2016).

### DFPS College Scholarships:

**Freshmen and Sophomore Success Scholarship** is for young adults formerly in DFPS foster care attending a Texas state-funded institution of higher education. This includes community colleges, colleges, universities, and Texas State Technical College. Application due dates are August 1 and November 1, prior to each semester.

Only students awarded the scholarship both semesters as a freshman may apply for the scholarship as a sophomore or as a 2nd year student at a Texas state-funded institution of higher education. Scholarships are \$1000 per semester or academic term or \$2000 for two semesters or academic terms.

[https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child\\_Protection/Youth\\_and\\_Young\\_Adults/Education/other\\_resources.asp](https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/Youth_and_Young_Adults/Education/other_resources.asp)

### C. Ed Davis-PAL Scholarship (est. July 2012)

This scholarship is for basic non-tuition needs for former foster youth who are majoring in government, political science, history, or other pre-law field. Scholarships are for \$1,000 per academic year and are available to *sophomore, junior* or *senior* year students. More information about these scholarships is available at:

[https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child\\_Protection/Youth\\_and\\_Young\\_Adults/Education/other\\_resources.asp#scholarships](https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/Youth_and_Young_Adults/Education/other_resources.asp#scholarships)



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College Resources for Foster Care Students

### **Temporary Housing Assistance between Academic Terms**

Texas' institutes of higher education are required to assist full-time students formerly in DFPS conservatorship or who have been legally emancipated in locating temporary housing between academic terms (Christmas and summer holiday breaks). Students must request the housing assistance and are encouraged to inquire at financial aid offices, student affairs offices, admissions offices, or housing/residence life/residential living offices.

### **College Foster Care Student Liaisons**

As of January 2016 each state supported college/university has appointed a foster care student liaison to help foster care students in coordinating college readiness and student success. Liaisons can help students navigate the college system and connect them to resources needed to achieve higher education goals. A list of liaisons is located at:

<https://reportcenter.highered.texas.gov/roster/> under "**CRS - CFAT - Foster Care Liaison Listing**".

### **Bacterial Meningitis Vaccine for Students Entering Post-Secondary Education**

Students under age 30 entering a Texas institution of higher education must be vaccinated for bacterial meningitis. For DFPS foster youth, payments for doctor's visits and vaccination costs are covered by the **FFCC** Medicaid (STAR Health or STAR) program.

## **Texas Medicaid-Former Foster Youth (18-25) and OTHER HEALTHCARE INFORMATION**

### **Former Foster Care Children (FFCC) Program**

The **FFCC** program provides continuous healthcare coverage through age 25 to young adults who age out of Texas foster care and are receiving Medicaid when they aged out. This population will receive healthcare services in two separate programs based on age;

- Young adults aged 18 through 20 will be enrolled in STAR Health but can switch to STAR upon request; and
- Young adults aged 21 through 25 will receive Medicaid through the STAR plan of their choice.

To be eligible for the FFCC program, the young adult must:

- Be age 18 through 25;
- Have been in Texas foster care on his or her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday or older;
- Be receiving Medicaid when he or she aged out of Texas foster care; and
- Be a U.S. Citizen or be a qualified alien for example have an I-551 permanent resident card.

### **Medicaid for Transitioning Foster Care Youth (MTFCY)**

Provides medical coverage to young adults age 18 through 20 who are not eligible for the FFCC program because they were not receiving Medicaid at the time they aged out of foster care. The following eligibility criteria apply:

- Be age 18 through 20 years of age;
- Have been in Texas foster care at age 18, or older;
- Have no other healthcare coverage;
- Meet program rules for income; and
- Be a U.S. Citizen or have a qualified alien status.

[https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child\\_Protection/Youth\\_and\\_Young\\_Adults/Transitional\\_Living/medical\\_benefits.asp](https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/Youth_and_Young_Adults/Transitional_Living/medical_benefits.asp)

### **Superior Healthplan-a2A CentAccount® Rewards Program (<https://www.fostercaretx.com>)**

This program offers reward dollars of up to \$160 for members who complete wellness visits, dental check-ups and other health screenings for members ages 18 through 21 years old. Visit the Texas Youth Connection-HEALTH section for more information: <https://www.fostercaretx.com/for-members/transitioning-youth/a2a.html>

### **Your Texas Benefits**

Young adults should be directed to use [YourTexasBenefits.com](http://YourTexasBenefits.com) including using the mobile app to manage their benefits at any time and place. The website and mobile app can be used to apply for and renew benefits and report changes such as an address update. STAR Member Helpful Numbers: **1-800-964-2777** or **1-866-912-6283**.

### **Health Passport**

The Health Passport is a computer-based system that has health data about youth and young adults in the STAR Health program. The Health Passport is not a full medical record. It has information on doctor and dentist visits, hospital stays,



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prescriptions and shot records. If a young adult wants access to his or hers Health Passport visit <https://www.superiorhealthplan.com/login.html> NOTE: Young adults must register for their Health Passport before exiting foster care by using his or hers Personal ID number that is available from the caseworker.

### 2-1-1 TEXAS

Young adults can call **2-1-1** to report any changes to an address, their case, check benefits, and request a Medicaid card. The young adults should identify as a "former foster youth" and notify the staff that they are calling about the **Former Foster Care Children** or **Medicaid for Transitioning Foster Care Youth** programs. Additionally, **2-1-1** may be contacted for non-medical issues such as applying for food stamps and family medical assistance. Information is available at this link: <https://www.211texas.org/211/>

### OTHER YOUTH/YOUNG ADULT RESOURCES

**Office of Consumer Relations (OCR)** 1-800-720-7777 handles complaints about specific cases related to DFPS program policy. We are here to help you, and you can trust us to fairly review your complaints and provide a written response upon completing a review. The OCR takes complaints from the public including youth currently or formerly in foster care ages 18 and older. Information is available at this link: <https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Contact Us/Questions and Complaints/OCR.asp>

**Texas Youth Hotline** is a resource for youth, parents, siblings and other family members who are in need of a caring voice and a listening ear. Individuals may contact the statewide hotline at **1-800-989-6884** for telephone counseling, information, and referrals or CHAT online or **TEXT 512-872-5777** for assistance. The hotline can help locate services available in local communities. More information is available at the [Texas Youth and Runaway Hotline](#) website.

**Texas Youth Connection** is a website designed with input from youth and young adults and is a resource for youth in the Texas foster care system, alumni of foster care, and stakeholders seeking general tips and information. This website offers information and resources about safety and well-being, education, finances/banking, records, healthcare, contacts, jobs, housing, Transition Center information, PAL contact information and other useful information. This page is located at: <https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/txyouth/Default.asp>

**Youth Take Flight Instagram** is another source for youth and young adults to find current, relevant resources, information, trending topics, positive youth stories and inspiration to reach life goals beneficial to the youth and young adult's transition to a successful adulthood. Instagram allows DFPS to stay connected with youth and young adults using a popular social media site. The page is located at: <https://www.instagram.com/youthtakeflight/>

**Statewide Youth Leadership Council (YLC)** is comprised of two elected or appointed youth or young adults (ages 16 to 21) per region. The purpose of the statewide YLC is to provide a forum for youth who are currently or were formerly in foster care to address identified issues and concerns about experiences in the DFPS foster care system and to make recommendations about improving services to children and youth in foster care. Upon request by CPS, the YLC reviews state policies and programs and provides feedback.

**Youth Specialists (alumni of foster care)** are hired as full time or part time employees in each DFPS region, one is located at the DFPS State Office. Youth Specialists play a key role in the development and support of Youth Leadership Councils, ensure that the voices of foster youth are heard, and engage foster youth in advocating activities. Youth specialists also serve to help strengthen and support CPS casework by informing DFPS of initiatives and activities affecting policy and practice.

### National Youth in Transition Data Base (NYTD)

NYTD is a data collection system created to track independent living services and to learn how successful states are in preparing youth to move from foster care into adulthood. Texas surveys youth in foster care when they turn age 17 and conducts follow-up surveys of some of these same youth at age 19 and again at age 21. Every three years a new cohort of 17 year olds is surveyed.

### Employment Preference to Former Foster Youth

Texas state agencies are required to give an employment preference to former foster youth (in the PMC of DFPS on the day preceding the young adult's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday) over other state applicants for the same position who do not have a greater qualification. An individual is entitled to an employment preference only if the young adult is 25 years of age or younger (day



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before turning 26). PAL staff will issue the employment preference letter to eligible young adults when they turn 18 or upon request.

### Activities and Events for youth and young adults

- **PAL Experiential Camp**-A camp held annually for youth (when a contractor is available) aimed at increasing self-esteem, improving communication skills, problem-solving and having fun.
- **PAL Statewide Teen Conference**-An annual three-day conference held in conjunction with Texas Woman's University, offering workshops for youth that lead to self-sufficiency and independence.
- **PAL College Conferences**-Texas A&M San Antonio and Austin Community College each host an annual two day conference for youth to learn about and prepare for higher education opportunities to include vocational programs.
- **Aging-Out Seminars** -Regions provide seminars to youth at age 17 before they leave care. Seminars include topics identified by youth to reinforce their knowledge and skills about DFPS programs, benefits, resources and other life skills such as nutrition and information about human trafficking. These seminars build on information from PAL Life Skills Training classes.
- **Regional Youth Leadership Councils (YLC) or Youth Advisory Boards**- Benefits of youth participation in a YLC include:
  - Opportunities for Community Services and Outreach projects to support foster youth;
  - Advocacy training to ensure the voices of foster youth are heard and incorporated into policy and practice;
  - Leadership building skills;
  - Planning and facilitating events;
  - Learn how to strategically share their story; and
  - Developing supportive friendships/caring adults
- **Regional conferences or events**- Regions provide teen conferences and other age-appropriate activities and events such as college conferences, back to school events, prom events, graduation celebrations, or holiday celebrations.

### Partnerships

**Transition Centers** provide one-stop services to serve the diverse needs of youth and young adults currently or formerly in foster care, homeless youth, or other at-risk youth. Services may include employment assistance, educational support, access and referrals to community partners and resources and various transitional living services such as PAL life skills training classes, food and housing assistance, and substance abuse / mental health counseling. Transition Centers also provide co-location opportunities for local partners such as local Workforce Solutions staff, TWC funded Workforce Advocates, and colleges and universities to jointly serve the diverse needs of the youth in one location. Currently, there are 18 Transition Centers which are independently funded, operated and supported by partnerships between DFPS, their Providers, community partners and the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC). A list of these Centers with contact information is available at the Texas Youth Connection Contacts page: [DFPS Regional Transition Centers](#)

### Youth Housing Services and Program

The Youth Housing Services and Program provides information to help youth transitioning from foster care to a successful adulthood learn about housing and rental assistance options. For eligible young adults (18 to 24) housing rental assistance vouchers should be a top priority.

The goal of the Youth Housing Services and Program at DFPS (Transitional Living Services) is to house as many young adults as possible, and to end homelessness for those transitioning from foster care to a successful adulthood. Providing information and support regarding targeted housing vouchers and rental assistance programs throughout Texas is the primary focus to achieve these goals.

Public housing authorities across the state provide rental assistance through housing vouchers. Two of these vouchers may be available in certain parts of the state to youth transitioning from foster care to a successful adulthood and who are at risk for homelessness. These vouchers are the **Family Unification Program (FUP) Voucher**, and the **Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) Voucher**.

The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs also operates a **Project 811 Rental Assistance Project**. This is another option available for youth transitioning from foster care to a successful adulthood with **disabilities**.



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For information about participating Public Housing Authorities, Project 811 availability, and Eligibility Requirements, contact Jim Currier at [jim.currier@dfps.state.gov](mailto:jim.currier@dfps.state.gov)

**Texas Workforce Commission/Local Workforce Boards/Transition Centers and DFPS Partnership:** 1) DFPS State Office and Texas Workforce Commission and 2) DFPS regional offices, 28 local Workforce Development Boards and local Transition Centers have jointly developed and entered into agreements addressing the unique challenges facing youth and young adults currently or formerly in foster care transitioning to a successful adulthood, including improving employment outcomes for *these youth and young adults*. The purpose of these MOU's relates to:

- Furthering the objectives of the DFPS Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) program;
- Ensuring job readiness, career exploration, employment, training and other related services such as internships, apprenticeships and vocational rehabilitation are prioritized and targeted to meet the needs of youth currently or formerly in foster care; and
- Making referrals, where feasible, for short term housing for foster youth who need housing.

DFPS staff, Workforce Advocates at Transition Centers, caregivers, and PAL contractors refer youth ages 16 and older to local *Texas Workforce Solutions* office's for job search and readiness assistance, career exploration, and employment and training services. Each Board has designated a point of contact for staff and youth to access for assistance and services. All youth and young adults are encouraged to register in the state job search system [www.WorkInTexas.com](http://www.WorkInTexas.com). For more information about foster care programs at Texas Workforce Commission: <https://www.twc.texas.gov/partners/foster-care-programs>

**Texas Workforce Commission Vocational Rehabilitation Services** are designed to remove a barrier to obtain or maintain employment for a student with a disability ages 14-22. In most cases, the services provided to transition students fall into one of these 5 Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) categories:

- **Career Exploration counseling**, making informed choices about various job opportunities
- **Work-Based Learning experiences**, which include in-school and after school-work opportunities
- **Job Readiness training**, to develop social skills and independent living
- **Counseling on postsecondary training**, or other comprehensive transition opportunities
- **Instruction in Self-Advocacy**, ability to effectively communicate, convey, negotiate or assert his/her own interests and/or desires

High School Vocational Rehabilitation Liaison Counselors, Workforce Advocates at Transition Centers, or PAL staff can help get youth and young adults connected to these services. For more information go to: <https://www.twc.texas.gov/jobseekers/vocational-rehabilitation-services>

Contact Information is at: <https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/txyouth/Default.asp>

