

SOCIAL WELFARE**CHAPTER 409****SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE****409.1451 Independent living transition services.--****(1) SYSTEM OF SERVICES.--**

(a) The Department of Children and Family Services, its agents, or community-based providers operating pursuant to s. 409.1671 shall administer a system of independent living transition services to enable older children in foster care and young adults who exit foster care at age 18 to make the transition to self-sufficiency as adults.

(b) The goals of independent living transition services are to assist older children in foster care and young adults who were formerly in foster care to obtain life skills and education for independent living and employment, to have a quality of life appropriate for their age, and to assume personal responsibility for becoming self-sufficient adults.

(c) State funds for foster care or federal funds shall be used to establish a continuum of services for eligible children in foster care and eligible young adults who were formerly in foster care which accomplish the goals for the system of independent living transition services by providing services for foster children, pursuant to subsection (4), and services for young adults who were formerly in foster care, pursuant to subsection (5).

(d) For children in foster care, independent living transition services are not an alternative to adoption. Independent living transition services may occur concurrently with continued efforts to locate and achieve placement in adoptive families for older children in foster care.

(2) ELIGIBILITY.--

(a) The department shall serve children who have reached 13 years of age but are not yet 18 years of age and who are in foster care by providing services pursuant to subsection (4). Children to be served must meet the eligibility requirements set forth for specific services as provided in this section.

(b) The department shall serve young adults who have reached 18 years of age but are not yet 23 years of age and who were in foster care when they turned 18 years of age or, after reaching 16 years of age were adopted from foster care or placed with a court-approved dependency guardian and have spent a minimum of 6 months in foster care within the 12 months immediately preceding such placement or adoption, by providing services pursuant to subsection (5). Young adults to be served must meet the eligibility requirements set forth for specific services in this section.

(3) PREPARATION FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING.--

(a) It is the intent of the Legislature for the Department of Children and Family Services to assist older children in foster care and young adults who exit foster care at age 18 in making the transition to independent living and self-sufficiency as adults. The department shall provide such children and young adults with opportunities to participate in life skills activities in their foster families and communities which are reasonable and appropriate for their respective ages or for any special needs they may have and shall provide them with services to build life skills and increase their ability to live independently and become self-sufficient. To support the provision of opportunities for participation in age-appropriate life skills activities, the department shall:

1. Develop a list of age-appropriate activities and responsibilities to be offered to all children involved in independent living transition services and their foster parents.

2. Provide training for staff and foster parents to address the issues of older children in foster care in transitioning to adulthood, which shall include information on high school completion, grant applications, vocational school opportunities, supporting education and employment opportunities, and opportunities to participate in appropriate daily activities.

3. Develop procedures to maximize the authority of foster parents, family foster homes, residential child-caring agencies, or other authorized caregivers to approve participation in age-appropriate activities of children in their care. The age-appropriate activities and the authority of the foster parent, family foster home, residential child-caring agency or caregiver shall be developed into a written plan that the foster parent, family foster home, residential child-caring agency, or caregiver, the child, and the case manager all develop together, sign, and follow. This plan must include specific goals and objectives and be reviewed and updated no less than quarterly. Foster parents, family foster homes, residential child-caring agencies, or other authorized caregivers who have developed a written plan as described in this subparagraph shall not be held responsible under administrative rules or laws pertaining to state licensure or have their licensure status in any manner jeopardized as a result of the actions of a child engaged in the approved age-appropriate activities specified in the written plan.

4. Provide opportunities for older children in foster care to interact with mentors.

5. Develop and implement procedures for older children to directly access and manage the personal allowance they receive from the department in order to learn responsibility and participate in age-appropriate life skills activities to the extent feasible.

6. Make a good faith effort to fully explain, prior to execution of any signature, if required, any document, report, form, or other record, whether written or electronic, presented to a child or young adult pursuant to this chapter and allow for the recipient to ask any appropriate questions necessary to fully understand the document. It shall be the responsibility of the person presenting the document to the child or young adult to comply with this subparagraph.

(b) It is further the intent of the Legislature that each child in foster care, his or her foster parents, if applicable, and the department or community-based provider set early achievement and career goals for the child's postsecondary educational and work experience. The department and community-based providers shall implement the model set forth in this paragraph to help ensure that children in foster care are ready for postsecondary education and the workplace.

1. For children in foster care who have reached 13 years of age, the department or community-based provider shall ensure that the child's case plan includes an educational and career path based upon both the abilities and interests of each child. The child, the foster parents, and a teacher or other school staff member shall be included to the fullest extent possible in developing the path. The path shall be reviewed at each judicial hearing as part of the case plan and shall accommodate the needs of children served in exceptional education programs to the extent appropriate for each individual. Such children may continue to follow the courses outlined in the district school board student progression plan. Children in foster care, with the assistance of their foster parents, and the department or community-based provider shall choose one of the following postsecondary goals:

a. Attending a 4-year college or university, a community college plus university, or a military academy;

b. Receiving a 2-year postsecondary degree;

c. Attaining a postsecondary career and technical certificate or credential; or

d. Beginning immediate employment, including apprenticeship, after completion of a high school diploma or its equivalent, or enlisting in the military.

2. In order to assist the child in foster care in achieving his or her chosen goal, the department or community-based provider shall, with the participation of the child and foster parents, identify:

a. The core courses necessary to qualify for a chosen goal.

b. Any elective courses which would provide additional help in reaching a chosen goal.

c. The grade point requirement and any additional information necessary to achieve a specific goal.

d. A teacher, other school staff member, employee of the department or community-based care provider, or community volunteer who would be willing to work with the child as an academic advocate or mentor if foster parent involvement is insufficient or unavailable.

3. In order to complement educational goals, the department and community-based providers are encouraged to form partnerships with the business community to support internships, apprenticeships, or other work-related opportunities.

4. The department and community-based providers shall ensure that children in foster care and their foster parents are made aware of the postsecondary goals available and shall assist in identifying the coursework necessary to enable the child to reach the chosen goal.

(c) All children in foster care and young adults formerly in foster care are encouraged to take part in learning opportunities that result from participation in community service activities.

(d) Children in foster care and young adults formerly in foster care shall be provided with the opportunity to change from one postsecondary goal to another, and each postsecondary goal shall allow for changes in each individual's needs and preferences. Any change, particularly a change that will result in additional time required to achieve a goal, shall be made with the guidance and assistance of the department or community-based provider.

(4) SERVICES FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE.--The department shall provide the following transition to independence services to children in foster care who meet prescribed conditions and are determined eligible by the department. The service categories available to children in foster care which facilitate successful transition into adulthood are:

(a) *Preindependent living services.*--

1. Preindependent living services include, but are not limited to, life skills training, educational field trips, and conferences. The specific services to be provided to a child shall be determined using a preindependent living assessment.

2. A child who has reached 13 years of age but is not yet 15 years of age who is in foster care is eligible for such services.

3. The department shall conduct an annual staffing for each child who has reached 13 years of age but is not yet 15 years of age to ensure that the preindependent living training and services to be provided as determined by the preindependent living assessment are being received and to evaluate the progress of the child in developing the needed independent living skills.

4. At the first annual staffing that occurs following a child's 14th birthday, and at each subsequent staffing, the department or community-based provider shall ensure that the child's case plan includes an educational and career path based upon both the abilities and interests of each child and shall provide to each child detailed personalized information on services provided by the Road-to-Independence Program, including requirements for eligibility; on other grants, scholarships, and waivers that are available and should be sought by the child with assistance from the department, including, but not limited to, the Bright Futures Scholarship Program, as provided in ss. 1009.53-1009.538; on application deadlines; and on grade requirements for such programs.

5. Information related to both the preindependent living assessment and all staffings, which shall be reduced to writing and signed by the child participant, shall be included as a part of the written report required to be provided to the court at each judicial review held pursuant to s. 39.701.

(b) *Life skills services.*--

1. Life skills services may include, but are not limited to, independent living skills training, including training to develop banking and budgeting skills, interviewing skills, parenting skills, and time management or organizational skills, educational support, employment training, and counseling. Children receiving these services should also be provided with information related to social security insurance benefits and public assistance. The specific services to be provided to a child shall be determined using an independent life skills assessment.

2. A child who has reached 15 years of age but is not yet 18 years of age who is in foster care is eligible for such services.

3. The department shall conduct a staffing at least once every 6 months for each child who has reached 15 years of age but is not yet 18 years of age to ensure that the appropriate independent living training and services as determined by the independent life skills assessment are being received and to evaluate the progress of the child in developing the needed independent living skills.

4. The department shall provide to each child in foster care during the calendar month following the child's 17th birthday an independent living assessment to determine the child's skills and abilities to live independently and become self-sufficient. Based on the results of the independent living assessment, services and training shall be provided in order for the child to develop the necessary skills and abilities prior to the child's 18th birthday.

5. Information related to both the independent life skills assessment and all staffings, which shall be reduced to writing and signed by the child participant, shall be included as a part of the written report required to be provided to the court at each judicial review held pursuant to s. 39.701.

(c) Subsidized independent living services.--

1. Subsidized independent living services are living arrangements that allow the child to live independently of the daily care and supervision of an adult in a setting that is not required to be licensed under s. 409.175.

2. A child who has reached 16 years of age but is not yet 18 years of age is eligible for such services and shall be formally evaluated for placement in a subsidized independent living arrangement, if he or she:

a. Is adjudicated dependent under chapter 39; has been placed in licensed out-of-home care for at least 6 months prior to entering subsidized independent living; and has a permanency goal of adoption, independent living, or long-term licensed care; and

b. Is able to demonstrate independent living skills, as determined by the department, using established procedures and assessments.

3. Independent living arrangements established for a child must be part of an overall plan leading to the total independence of the child from the department's supervision. The plan must include, but need not be limited to, a description of the skills of the child and a plan for learning additional identified skills; the behavior that the child has exhibited which indicates an ability to be responsible and a plan for developing additional responsibilities, as appropriate; a plan for future educational, vocational, and training skills; present financial and budgeting capabilities and a plan for improving resources and ability; a description of the proposed residence; documentation that the child understands the specific consequences of his or her conduct in the independent living program; documentation of proposed services to be provided by the department and other agencies, including the type of service and the nature and frequency of contact; and a plan for maintaining or developing relationships with the family, other adults, friends, and the community, as appropriate.

4. Subsidy payments in an amount established by the department may be made directly to a child under the direct supervision of a caseworker or other responsible adult approved by the department.

(5) SERVICES FOR YOUNG ADULTS FORMERLY IN FOSTER CARE.--Based on the availability of funds, the department shall provide or arrange for the following services to young adults formerly in foster care who meet the prescribed conditions and are determined eligible by the department. The department, or a community-based care lead agency when the agency is under contract with the department to provide the services described under this subsection, shall develop a plan to implement those services. A plan shall be developed for each community-based care service area in the state. Each plan that is developed by a community-based care lead agency shall be submitted to the department. Each plan shall include the number of young adults to be served each month of the fiscal year and specify the number of young adults who will reach 18 years of age who will be eligible for the plan and the number of young adults who will reach 23 years of age and will be ineligible for the plan or who are otherwise ineligible during each month of the

fiscal year; staffing requirements and all related costs to administer the services and program; expenditures to or on behalf of the eligible recipients; costs of services provided to young adults through an approved plan for housing, transportation, and employment; reconciliation of these expenses and any additional related costs with the funds allocated for these services; and an explanation of and a plan to resolve any shortages or surpluses in order to end the fiscal year with a balanced budget. The categories of services available to assist a young adult formerly in foster care to achieve independence are:

(a) *Aftercare support services.*--

1. Aftercare support services are available to assist young adults who were formerly in foster care in their efforts to continue to develop the skills and abilities necessary for independent living. The aftercare support services available include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. Mentoring and tutoring.
- b. Mental health services and substance abuse counseling.
- c. Life skills classes, including credit management and preventive health activities.
- d. Parenting classes.
- e. Job and career skills training.
- f. Counselor consultations.
- g. Temporary financial assistance.
- h. Financial literacy skills training.

The specific services to be provided under this subparagraph shall be determined by an aftercare services assessment and may be provided by the department or through referrals in the community.

2. Temporary assistance provided to prevent homelessness shall be provided as expeditiously as possible and within the limitations defined by the department.

3. A young adult who has reached 18 years of age but is not yet 23 years of age who leaves foster care at 18 years of age but who requests services prior to reaching 23 years of age is eligible for such services.

(b) *Road-to-Independence Program.*--

1. The Road-to-Independence Program is intended to help eligible students who are former foster children in this state to receive the educational and vocational training needed to achieve independence. The amount of the award shall be based on the living and educational needs of the young adult and may be up to, but may not exceed, the amount of earnings that the student would have been eligible to earn working a 40-hour-a-week federal minimum wage job.

2. A young adult who has earned a standard high school diploma or its equivalent as described in s. 1003.43 or s. 1003.435, has earned a special diploma or special certificate of completion as described in s. 1003.438, or has reached 18 years of age but is not yet 21 years of age is eligible for the initial award, and a young adult under 23 years of age is eligible for renewal awards, if he or she:

- a. Was a dependent child, under chapter 39, and was living in licensed foster care or in subsidized independent living at the time of his or her 18th birthday or is currently living in licensed foster care or subsidized independent living, or, after reaching the age of 16 was adopted from foster care or placed with a court-approved dependency guardian and has spent a minimum of 6 months in foster care immediately preceding such placement or adoption;
- b. Spent at least 6 months living in foster care before reaching his or her 18th birthday;
- c. Is a resident of this state as defined in s. 1009.40; and
- d. Meets one of the following qualifications:

(I) Has earned a standard high school diploma or its equivalent as described in s. 1003.43 or s. 1003.435, or has earned a special diploma or special certificate of completion as described in s. 1003.438, and has been admitted for full-time enrollment in an eligible postsecondary education institution as defined in s. 1009.533;

(II) Is enrolled full time in an accredited high school; or

(III) Is enrolled full time in an accredited adult education program designed to provide the student with a high school diploma or its equivalent.

3. A young adult applying for the Road-to-Independence Program must apply for any other grants and scholarships for which he or she may qualify. The department shall assist the young adult in the application process and may use the federal financial aid grant process to determine the funding needs of the young adult.

4. An award shall be available to a young adult who is considered a full-time student or its equivalent by the educational institution in which he or she is enrolled, unless that young adult has a recognized disability preventing full-time attendance. The amount of the award, whether it is being used by a young adult working toward completion of a high school diploma or its equivalent or working toward completion of a postsecondary education program, shall be determined based on an assessment of the funding needs of the young adult. This assessment must consider the young adult's living and educational costs and other grants, scholarships, waivers, earnings, and other income to be received by the young adult. An award shall be available only to the extent that other grants and scholarships are not sufficient to meet the living and educational needs of the young adult, but an award may not be less than \$25 in order to maintain Medicaid eligibility for the young adult as provided in s. 409.903.

5. The amount of the award may be disregarded for purposes of determining the eligibility for, or the amount of, any other federal or federally supported assistance.

6.a. The department must advertise the criteria, application procedures, and availability of the program to:

(I) Children and young adults in, leaving, or formerly in foster care.

(II) Case managers.

(III) Guidance and family services counselors.

(IV) Principals or other relevant school administrators.

(V) Guardians ad litem.

(VI) Foster parents.

b. The department shall issue awards from the program for each young adult who meets all the requirements of the program to the extent funding is available.

c. An award shall be issued at the time the eligible student reaches 18 years of age.

d. A young adult who is eligible for the Road-to-Independence Program, transitional support services, or aftercare services and who so desires shall be allowed to reside with the licensed foster family or group care provider with whom he or she was residing at the time of attaining his or her 18th birthday or to reside in another licensed foster home or with a group care provider arranged by the department.

e. If the award recipient transfers from one eligible institution to another and continues to meet eligibility requirements, the award must be transferred with the recipient.

f. Funds awarded to any eligible young adult under this program are in addition to any other services or funds provided to the young adult by the department through transitional support services or aftercare services.

g. The department shall provide information concerning young adults receiving funding through the Road-to-Independence Program to the Department of Education for inclusion in the student financial assistance database, as provided in s. 1009.94.

h. Funds are intended to help eligible young adults who are former foster children in this state to receive the educational and vocational training needed to become independent and self-supporting. The funds shall be terminated when the young adult has attained one of four postsecondary goals under subsection (3) or reaches 23 years of age, whichever occurs earlier. In order to initiate postsecondary education, to allow for a change in career goal, or to obtain additional skills in the same educational or vocational area, a young adult may earn no more than two diplomas, certificates, or credentials. A young adult attaining an associate of arts or associate of science degree shall be permitted to work toward

completion of a bachelor of arts or a bachelor of science degree or an equivalent undergraduate degree. Road-to-Independence Program funds may not be used for education or training after a young adult has attained a bachelor of arts or a bachelor of science degree or an equivalent undergraduate degree.

i. The department shall evaluate and renew each award annually during the 90-day period before the young adult's birthday. In order to be eligible for a renewal award for the subsequent year, the young adult must:

(I) Complete the number of hours, or the equivalent considered full time by the educational institution, unless that young adult has a recognized disability preventing full-time attendance, in the last academic year in which the young adult earned an award, except for a young adult who meets the requirements of s. 1009.41.

(II) Maintain appropriate progress as required by the educational institution, except that, if the young adult's progress is insufficient to renew the award at any time during the eligibility period, the young adult may restore eligibility by improving his or her progress to the required level.

j. Funds may be terminated during the interim between an award and the evaluation for a renewal award if the department determines that the award recipient is no longer enrolled in an educational institution as defined in sub-subparagraph 2.d., or is no longer a state resident. The department shall notify a recipient who is terminated and inform the recipient of his or her right to appeal.

k. An award recipient who does not qualify for a renewal award or who chooses not to renew the award may subsequently apply for reinstatement. An application for reinstatement must be made before the young adult reaches 23 years of age, and a student may not apply for reinstatement more than once. In order to be eligible for reinstatement, the young adult must meet the eligibility criteria and the criteria for award renewal for the program.

(c) *Transitional support services.--*

1. In addition to any services provided through aftercare support or the Road-to-Independence Program, a young adult formerly in foster care may receive other appropriate short-term funding and services, which may include financial, housing, counseling, employment, education, mental health, disability, and other services, if the young adult demonstrates that the services are critical to the young adult's own efforts to achieve self-sufficiency and to develop a personal support system. The department or community-based care provider shall work with the young adult in developing a joint transition plan that is consistent with a needs assessment identifying the specific need for transitional services to support the young adult's own efforts. The young adult must have specific tasks to complete or maintain included in the plan and be accountable for the completion of or making progress towards the completion of these tasks. If the young adult and the department or community-based care provider cannot come to agreement regarding any part of the plan, the young adult may access a grievance process to its full extent in an effort to resolve the disagreement.

2. A young adult formerly in foster care is eligible to apply for transitional support services if he or she has reached 18 years of age but is not yet 23 years of age, was a dependent child pursuant to chapter 39, was living in licensed foster care or in subsidized independent living at the time of his or her 18th birthday, and had spent at least 6 months living in foster care before that date.

3. If at any time the services are no longer critical to the young adult's own efforts to achieve self-sufficiency and to develop a personal support system, they shall be terminated.

(d) *Payment of aftercare, Road-to-Independence Program, or transitional support funds.--*

1. Payment of aftercare, Road-to-Independence Program, or transitional support funds shall be made directly to the recipient unless the recipient requests in writing to the community-based care lead agency, or the department, that the payments or a portion of the payments be made directly on the recipient's behalf in order to secure services such as housing, counseling, education, or employment training as part of the young adult's own efforts to achieve self-sufficiency.

2. After the completion of aftercare support services that satisfy the requirements of sub-subparagraph (a)1.h., payment of awards under the Road-to-Independence Program shall be made by direct deposit to the recipient, unless the recipient requests in writing to the community-based care lead agency or the department that:

- a. The payments be made directly to the recipient by check or warrant;
- b. The payments or a portion of the payments be made directly on the recipient's behalf to institutions the recipient is attending to maintain eligibility under this section; or
- c. The payments be made on a two-party check to a business or landlord for a legitimate expense, whether reimbursed or not. A legitimate expense for the purposes of this sub-subparagraph shall include automobile repair or maintenance expenses; educational, job, or training expenses; and costs incurred, except legal costs, fines, or penalties, when applying for or executing a rental agreement for the purposes of securing a home or residence.

3. The community-based care lead agency may purchase housing, transportation, or employment services to ensure the availability and affordability of specific transitional services thereby allowing an eligible young adult to utilize these services in lieu of receiving a direct payment. Prior to purchasing such services, the community-based care lead agency must have a plan approved by the department describing the services to be purchased, the rationale for purchasing the services, and a specific range of expenses for each service that is less than the cost of purchasing the service by an individual young adult. The plan must include a description of the transition of a young adult using these services into independence and a timeframe for achievement of independence. An eligible young adult who prefers a direct payment shall receive such payment. The plan must be reviewed annually and evaluated for cost-efficiency and for effectiveness in assisting young adults in achieving independence, preventing homelessness among young adults, and enabling young adults to earn a livable wage in a permanent employment situation.

4. The young adult who resides with a foster family may not be included as a child in calculating any licensing restriction on the number of children in the foster home.

(e) Appeals process.--

1. The Department of Children and Family Services shall adopt by rule a procedure by which a young adult may appeal an eligibility determination or the department's failure to provide aftercare, Road-to-Independence Program, or transitional support services, or the termination of such services, if such funds are available.

2. The procedure developed by the department must be readily available to young adults, must provide timely decisions, and must provide for an appeal to the Secretary of Children and Family Services. The decision of the secretary constitutes final agency action and is reviewable by the court as provided in s. 120.68.

(6) **ACCOUNTABILITY.**--The department shall develop outcome measures for the program and other performance measures in order to maintain oversight of the program. The department shall prepare a report on the outcome measures and the department's oversight activities and submit the report to the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the committees with jurisdiction over issues relating to children and families in the Senate and the House of Representatives no later than January 31 of each year. The report must include:

(a) An analysis of performance on the outcome measures developed under this section reported for each community-based care lead agency and compared with the performance of the department on the same measures.

(b) A description of the department's oversight of the program, including, by lead agency, any programmatic or fiscal deficiencies found, corrective actions required, and current status of compliance.

(c) Any rules adopted or proposed under this section since the last report. For the purposes of the first report, any rules adopted or proposed under this section must be included.

(7) INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL.--The Secretary of Children and Family Services shall establish the Independent Living Services Advisory Council for the purpose of reviewing and making recommendations concerning the implementation and operation of the independent living transition services. This advisory council shall continue to function as specified in this subsection until the Legislature determines that the advisory council can no longer provide a valuable contribution to the department's efforts to achieve the goals of the independent living transition services.

(a) Specifically, the advisory council shall assess the implementation and operation of the system of independent living transition services and advise the department on actions that would improve the ability of the independent living transition services to meet the established goals. The advisory council shall keep the department informed of problems being experienced with the services, barriers to the effective and efficient integration of services and support across systems, and successes that the system of independent living transition services has achieved. The department shall consider, but is not required to implement, the recommendations of the advisory council.

(b) The advisory council shall report to the appropriate substantive committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives on the status of the implementation of the system of independent living transition services; efforts to publicize the availability of aftercare support services, the Road-to-Independence Program, and transitional support services; the success of the services; problems identified; recommendations for department or legislative action; and the department's implementation of the recommendations contained in the Independent Living Services Integration Workgroup Report submitted to the Senate and the House substantive committees December 31, 2002. This advisory council report shall be submitted by December 31 of each year that the council is in existence and shall be accompanied by a report from the department which identifies the recommendations of the advisory council and either describes the department's actions to implement these recommendations or provides the department's rationale for not implementing the recommendations.

(c) Members of the advisory council shall be appointed by the secretary of the department. The membership of the advisory council must include, at a minimum, representatives from the headquarters and district offices of the Department of Children and Family Services, community-based care lead agencies, the Agency for Workforce Innovation, the Department of Education, the Agency for Health Care Administration, the State Youth Advisory Board, Workforce Florida, Inc., the Statewide Guardian Ad Litem Office, foster parents, recipients of Road-to-Independence Program funding, and advocates for foster children. The secretary shall determine the length of the term to be served by each member appointed to the advisory council, which may not exceed 4 years.

(d) The Department of Children and Family Services shall provide administrative support to the Independent Living Services Advisory Council to accomplish its assigned tasks. The advisory council shall be afforded access to all appropriate data from the department, each community-based care lead agency, and other relevant agencies in order to accomplish the tasks set forth in this section. The data collected may not include any information that would identify a specific child or young adult.

(e) The advisory council report required under paragraph (b) to be submitted to the substantive committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives by December 31, 2008, shall include an analysis of the system of independent living transition services for young adults who attain 18 years of age while in foster care prior to completing high school or its equivalent and recommendations for department or legislative action. The council shall assess and report on the most effective method of assisting these young adults to complete high school or its equivalent by examining the practices of other states.

(8) PERSONAL PROPERTY.--Property acquired on behalf of clients of this program shall become the personal property of the clients and is not subject to the requirements of chapter 273 relating to state-owned tangible personal property. Such property continues to be subject to applicable federal laws.

(9) MEDICAL ASSISTANCE FOR YOUNG ADULTS FORMERLY IN FOSTER CARE.--The

department shall enroll in the Florida KidCare program, outside the open enrollment period, each young adult who is eligible as described in paragraph (2)(b) and who has not yet reached his or her 19th birthday.

(a) A young adult who was formerly in foster care at the time of his or her 18th birthday and who is 18 years of age but not yet 19, shall pay the premium for the Florida KidCare program as required in s. 409.814.

(b) A young adult who has health insurance coverage from a third party through his or her employer or who is eligible for Medicaid is not eligible for enrollment under this subsection.

(10) RULEMAKING.--The department shall adopt by rule procedures to administer this section, including balancing the goals of normalcy and safety for the youth and providing the caregivers with as much flexibility as possible to enable the youth to participate in normal life experiences. The department shall not adopt rules relating to reductions in awards. The department shall engage in appropriate planning to prevent, to the extent possible, a reduction in awards after issuance.

History.--s. 3, ch. 2002-19; s. 44, ch. 2003-1; s. 6, ch. 2003-146; s. 1, ch. 2004-362; s. 3, ch. 2005-179; s. 11, ch. 2006-194; s. 2, ch. 2007-147; s. 1, ch. 2008-122.