



DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Family Services Policy Manual

160

Chapter:	Working with Adolescents and Justice Involved Youth	
Subject:	Supporting Adolescents in DCF Custody	Page 1 of 15
Approved:	Karen Shea, Deputy Commissioner	Effective: 8/14/18
Supersedes:	Supporting Adolescents in DCF Custody	Dated: 11/20/17

Purpose

To describe the principles and policy that guide adolescent practice and planning.

Table of Contents

Purpose	1
Table of Contents	1
Related Policies	2
Introduction	2
Policy	3
Case Planning & Documentation	3
List of Rights and Contact Information	4
NYTD	4
Transition to Adulthood (90-Day) Plan	5
Providing Important Documents	5
Registering to Vote and for the Selective Service	5
Appointing a Health Care Agent	6
Permanency Planning for Youth	6
Normalcy	6
Health Care	7
Sexual Health Education	7
Financial Literacy and Credit Checks	7
Driving and Independent Transportation	8
Youth Development Program (YDP)	8
Youth Investment Grants	9
Extended Care	10
Completion of Secondary Education	10
Adult Living Program	11
Independent Living	11
Special Case Circumstances	11
Another Planned Permanent Placement (APPLA)	11
Preparation for Independent Living	12
Pregnant and Parenting Youth	12
Social Security Insurance Review	12
Developmental Services Review	13
Adult Mental Health	14
Adult/Public Guardianship	14

 VERMONT DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES Family Services Policy Manual		<h1>160</h1>
Chapter:	Working with Adolescents and Justice Involved Youth	
Subject:	Supporting Adolescents in DCF Custody	Page 2 of 15

Appendices14

Related Policies

- Family Services Policy 74: Pregnant and Parenting Teens in Custody
- Family Services Policy 75: Normalcy and the Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standard
- Family Services Policy 76: Supporting and Affirming LGBTQ Children and Youth
- Family Services Policy 125: Permanency Planning for Children and Youth in DCF Custody
- Family Services Policy 138: Credit Checks for Youth 14 and Older in DCF Custody

Introduction

The child welfare and juvenile justice system for adolescents in the custody of DCF Family Services must focus intentionally on a youth’s well-being. This takes into consideration not just to the youth’s safety and permanency, but also their social, emotional, behavioral, physical and spiritual health needs. It is important that our staff who interact with youth understand the youth’s hopes and aspirations. This way, Family Services Workers can assist youth in taking advantage of opportunities to pursue their interests and find support when challenges arise.

Adolescence is a unique developmental period. There is a tremendous amount of brain growth that takes place during adolescence and into adulthood. This is a pivotal time to provide positive opportunities and experiences that help the brain to create new neural pathways. Understanding adolescent development and using this knowledge to build opportunities designed to help youth acquire the knowledge, competencies, and attitudes will contribute to healthy outcomes in adulthood.

Supportive and nurturing adults, as well as positive peer relationships, play key roles in promoting the development of resilience, self-confidence and self-regulation, all essential components of well-being. These relationships also serve to guide youth when coping with stressful situations.

Although youth might at times be reluctant to seek help, self-advocacy is instrumental in building resilience.

All youth should have both the tools and the opportunity to access:

- Basic necessities such as healthy food and a safe environment, and
- Individualized services, such as educational, legal, and mental and physical health when needed.

 VERMONT DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES Family Services Policy Manual		<h1>160</h1>
Chapter:	Working with Adolescents and Justice Involved Youth	
Subject:	Supporting Adolescents in DCF Custody	Page 3 of 15

Excessive exposure to risk can negatively impact well-being. Actively building a framework for thinking about adolescent development that includes the Youth Thrive protective and promotive factors can help to reduce risk, build well-being, and increase the likelihood of positive and improved outcomes.

The Youth Thrive protective and promotive factors are:

- **Youth Resilience:** Managing stress and functioning well when faced with stressors, challenges or adversity. The outcome is personal growth and positive change.
- **Social Connections:** Having healthy, sustained relationships with people, institutions, the community and a force greater than oneself that promote a sense of trust, belonging and feeling that they matter.
- **Knowledge of Adolescent Development:** Understanding one's behavior and stage of maturation in the context of the unique aspects of adolescent development (e.g., brain development, the impact of trauma); services that are developmentally and contextually appropriate (e.g., positive youth development strategies).
- **Concrete Support in Times of Need:** Understanding the importance of asking for help and advocating for oneself; receiving quality services designed to preserve youth's dignity, providing opportunities for skill development and promoting healthy development (e.g., strengths-based, trauma informed practice).
- **Cognitive and Social-Emotional Competence:** Acquiring skills and attitudes that are essential for forming an independent identity and having a productive, responsible and satisfying adulthood (e.g., self-regulation, executive functioning and character strengths).

Policy

There are a series of requirements designed to support healthy adolescent development for youth involved with the child welfare and juvenile justice system in Vermont.

Case Planning & Documentation

All youth served by the division will be at the forefront of decision-making and case planning activities. No single approach, accommodation, or plan will apply in all circumstances. Family Services Workers, with the support of supervisors, must bring recommendations for appropriate resources and supports for youth on a case-by-case basis, informed by the individual youth's needs. Family Services Workers shall document all activities related to federal and state requirements outlined in this policy in a combination of the youth's case notes and case plans.

 VERMONT DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES Family Services Policy Manual		<h1>160</h1>
Chapter:	Working with Adolescents and Justice Involved Youth	
Subject:	Supporting Adolescents in DCF Custody	Page 4 of 15

It is required by law that youth age 14 and older are consulted in the development of their case plan. Youth are permitted to identify and invite at least two people of their choosing to be a part of their case planning team (other than a foster parent or a case manager). FSD is permitted to reject an individual selected by the youth if they have good reason to believe that they would not act in the best interest of the youth.

The case plan must include a description of:

- Where the youth will be living,
- What services the youth and their parents and foster parents will receive,
- The health and education records of the youth,
- A plan for education stability,
- Information relating to sexual health services,
- Resources to ensure youth are prepared to make healthy decisions about their lives,
- Steps the agency is taking in finding the youth an adoptive family, and
- Explanations as to why a youth cannot be reunified with their family if kinship care is determined to be the permanent placement.

List of Rights and Contact Information

Family Services Workers are required to provide a written list of rights and updated team contact information to youth ages 14 and older annually outlining their rights in care as they pertain to education, health care, visitations, court hearings/participation, the right to stay safe, a free annual credit report and help resolving any inaccuracies. Youth must sign the document indicating that they received a list of rights and that they were explained in an age-appropriate way. This document must be provided to the youth and a copy must be retained for the file. See appendix 3 for the List of Rights and Contact Information template.

NYTD

DCF Family Services Division is required to comply with federal National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) reporting expectations. Division staff are required to collect demographic and outcome information for certain youth in foster care within 45 days after their 17th birthday. Central office staff will provide a list of youth, the outcomes survey, and timelines to Family Services Workers and supervisors as surveys are required. Youth are surveyed regarding six outcomes: financial self-sufficiency, experience with homelessness, educational attainment, positive connections with adults, high-risk behavior, and access to health insurance. Family Services Workers must collect “participant locator forms/consents” from youth upon completion of the survey. This contact information is used to assist YDP with collecting additional required outcomes information for these same youth at ages 19 and 21.

 VERMONT DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES Family Services Policy Manual		<h1>160</h1>
Chapter:	Working with Adolescents and Justice Involved Youth	
Subject:	Supporting Adolescents in DCF Custody	Page 5 of 15

Transition to Adulthood (90-Day) Plan

Federal law requires that 90 days prior to youth turning 18 in DCF custody, youth have a written transition plan outlining specific plans and information regarding educational, vocational, and employment, health care and insurance, transportation including, assistance in obtaining a driver's license, money management, housing, social and recreational skills, establishing and maintaining connections with family and community, and regular opportunities to engage in normal developmentally appropriate activities.

In creating this plan Family Services Workers shall:

- Work collaboratively with the youth, Youth Development Coordinator, other professionals, and individuals the youth has identified as supports.
- Complete the plan within 90 days prior to the youth's 18th birthday.
- Have the youth sign the document indicating it is their plan and they were involved in creating it.
- Retain the plan in the youth's file and provide a copy to the Youth Development Program.

The plan shall describe the services, supports, and rights available to youth upon age of majority, a description of how this information has been explained, and the signature of the youth acknowledging receipt of this information. See appendix 2 for the Transition to Adulthood (90-Day) Plan.

Providing Important Documents

Family Services Workers are responsible for ensuring that prior to exiting foster care at 18, youth receive the following documents: official documentation to prove the child was in foster care, a certified birth certificate, Social Security card, health insurance information, a driver's license or state identification card, and education and medical records held by DCF. These documents are essential to ensuring that youth aging out of foster care have the documentation needed to secure housing, apply to school or work, get appropriate health and mental health care, or access other forms of assistance. Family Services Workers should discuss with youth ways in which they can keep these documents safe, such as using of a safe deposit box, a lock box, or asking a trusted person to hold them. Family Services Workers must note in the file that these documents have been provided to youth prior to leaving care.

Registering to Vote and for the Selective Service

Family Services Workers are encouraged to inform male youth of their legal responsibility to register for the Selective Service at age 18. From the [United States Government's Selective](#)

 VERMONT DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES Family Services Policy Manual		<h1>160</h1>
Chapter:	Working with Adolescents and Justice Involved Youth	
Subject:	Supporting Adolescents in DCF Custody	Page 6 of 15

[Service System website](#), “Individuals who are born female and changed their gender to male are not required to register. U.S. citizens or immigrants who are born male and changed their gender to female are still required to register.” If youth fail to register, they may not be eligible for federal student loans and grants, federal jobs, or job training and assistance programs.

Staff are also encouraged to share information with all youth turning 18 about their opportunity to register to vote.

Appointing a Health Care Agent

Federal law requires that youth in custody receive information on the importance of formally designating another individual to make health care treatment decisions on their behalf if they should be unable to make these decisions as an adult. Family Services Workers shall provide the youth with a written explanation of how to Appoint a Health Care Agent. This discussion shall be noted in case notes, case plans, and in the youth’s final Transition to Adulthood Plan. See appendix 4 for additional guidance for sharing this information with youth.

Permanency Planning for Youth

Every child in custody deserves permanence. All efforts must be made to ensure youth have an identified permanency plan. When reunification, adoption, or permanent guardianship cannot be achieved, all of the youth's significant relationships should be evaluated to ensure continuity of connections and support of the youth into adulthood. Reinstatement of parental rights that were previously terminated should be considered. Adoption after the youth turns 18 should also be explored. Such adoptions do not require termination of parental rights. For additional information, see related policies section.

Normalcy

Division staff shall support a foster youth’s emotional and developmental growth by permitting them to participate in normal developmentally-appropriate activities or events. Foster youth require the same opportunities as other youth to explore healthy risk-taking, establish peer relationships, participate in extracurricular activities, engage in the community, and to explore culture and identity. Federal regulations require that we make efforts to provide these opportunities for youth in care. Participation in extracurricular and social activities has been found to be effective in changing the course for many youth and preparing them for a successful transition to adulthood and independence. The more youth are exposed to activities and individuals in the community, the more opportunities youth will have to form healthy, supportive relationships with peers and supportive adults who can facilitate permanency. These

 VERMONT DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES Family Services Policy Manual		<h1>160</h1>
Chapter:	Working with Adolescents and Justice Involved Youth	
Subject:	Supporting Adolescents in DCF Custody	Page 7 of 15

opportunities and efforts should be summarized in the youth’s case plan and documented in case notes. For additional information, see related policies section.

Health Care

Youth participation in regular preventative health, dental, and mental health care is correlated with increased well-being in adulthood including positive impacts on education, employment, and safe and stable housing. Helping foster youth establish these habits is an important task for division staff. Family Services Workers are responsible for encouraging access to preventative health care with a primary care physician at least once per year, preventative dental health care every six-months, access to mental health care as appropriate, and to document these efforts in case plans and case notes. Family Services Workers shall ensure that youth have information about reapplying for Medicaid before turning 18. The Affordable Care Act guarantees Medicaid eligibility for youth that leave foster care at age 18 until they turn 26, regardless of income.

Sexual Health Education

Research shows that youth with a history of foster care are more likely than their peers to experience early pregnancy and parenting. It is the role of Family Services Workers to ensure pro-active access to age-appropriate, medically accurate information about reproductive health care, the prevention of unplanned pregnancy, and the prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted infections. It is also the role of Family Services Workers to support reproductive health treatment and intervention that is determined to be medically appropriate. These efforts should be summarized in the youth’s case plan and documented in case notes. Per Vermont law, youth of any age are permitted to seek reproductive health services without parent/guardian or partner permission. For additional information, see related policies section.

Financial Literacy and Credit Checks

Youth need opportunities to prepare for managing their finances in young adulthood. The Youth Development Program supports these activities, but Family Services Workers should also encourage youth to participate in part-time employment, open a bank account, and identify community financial education resources. These opportunities and efforts should be summarized in the youth’s case plan and documented in case notes.

The division has a centralized process for obtaining credit reports annually for youth ages 14 and older, initiating the remediation process when there are identified issues, and providing credit check information to Family Services Workers. Family Services Workers will help youth to

 VERMONT DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES Family Services Policy Manual		<h1>160</h1>
Chapter:	Working with Adolescents and Justice Involved Youth	
Subject:	Supporting Adolescents in DCF Custody	Page 8 of 15

understand the report and to resolve any inaccuracies. For additional information, see related policies section.

Driving and Independent Transportation

Transportation is one of the largest barriers foster youth face in their transition to adulthood. It impacts every aspect of well-being and is often an impediment to meeting education and employment goals. Public transportation options are not available for all youth. For youth who do not have access to safe and reliable public transportation options, obtaining a driver's license is critical to their future success.

DCF shall support youth in care, when appropriate to age and other circumstances, to receive assistance, knowledge, and skills related to preparing to drive. Obtaining a driver's license is a normal and healthy experience for foster youth. Active efforts to support this goal should include identification of appropriate car insurance plans, ensuring that youth are able to engage in the required number of driving practice hours, and that youth will have access to a vehicle for the required driving test.

Youth in the custody of the Department should be encouraged to obtain their drivers' permit when they have reached 15 years of age. Youth that are in the custody of the Department will need guardian permission to take the drivers' permit and drivers' license exams. The Family Services Worker, or another DCF representative, must sign the applications before youth take the required tests. Youth should be encouraged to complete a driver training course after age 15 and upon obtaining a drivers' permit. Most high schools offer drivers' education classes but oftentimes, these opportunities may not be available. For youth engaged in services, the Youth Development Program may contribute to the costs of drivers' permits, licenses, private drivers' education courses, and car insurance premiums.

Youth Development Program (YDP)

In Vermont, federally required Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood services are administered through the Youth Development Program (YDP). In coordination with each DCF Family Services district office, Youth Development Coordinators (YDCs) assist youth to achieve safety, well-being, permanency, and self-sufficiency skills as they transition from custody to young adulthood and independent community settings.

The Youth Development Program supports current and former foster youth with:

- Transitioning to self-sufficiency by providing services;

 VERMONT DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES Family Services Policy Manual		<h1>160</h1>
Chapter:	Working with Adolescents and Justice Involved Youth	
Subject:	Supporting Adolescents in DCF Custody	Page 9 of 15

- Receiving the education, training, and services necessary to obtain employment;
- Preparing for and entering post-secondary training and educational institutions;
- Providing personal and emotional support through mentors and the promotion of interactions with dedicated adults;
- Providing financial, housing, counseling, employment, education, and other appropriate support and services;
- Ensuring that youth have regular, on-going opportunities to engage in developmentally-appropriate activities.

Family Services Workers are required to refer all youth in custody to the Youth Development Program at age 14. In districts where there are YDP capacity challenges, DCF District Directors will work with YDP contract providers to prioritize which youth are served. Referral forms should be complete and provide sufficient information for delivery of services. Family Services Workers should promote active participation of all youth who have reached their 17th birthday. These youth are at a critical stage of preparing for their future and will be prioritized for services by the program.

Youth are eligible for services from the Youth Development Program from ages 14 to 23. Family Services Workers should encourage youth to access this resource as needed. More information about the roles and responsibilities of Youth Development Coordinators can be found in Appendix 5.

At times, DCF may be required to place a youth in custody out-of-state and it may be challenging for YDP to sufficiently serve these youth. In these cases, it is the responsibility of the Family Services Worker to ensure that these same transitional services are provided to the youth. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood services are provided in all states. Contact information for Independent Living Coordinators by state can be found [here](#).

Youth Investment Grants

Youth investment grants are intended to provide opportunities for youth ages 14-23 to explore identity and interests and to build strengths, resources, skills, and positive connections to peers, adults, and communities. These concrete supports are also available for youth in times of need, with a goal of helping youth to maintain stability, build assets, eliminate barriers to achieving goals, and crisis prevention and recovery. Funding is available for youth engaged with the Youth Development Program. Funding requests are described in VSAs and grants are tied directly to youth goals. VSAs are developed by the Youth Development Program, in coordination with youth, Family Services Workers, placement providers, and other team members.

 VERMONT DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES Family Services Policy Manual		<h1>160</h1>
Chapter:	Working with Adolescents and Justice Involved Youth	
Subject:	Supporting Adolescents in DCF Custody	Page 10 of 15

Extended Care

The Vermont Youth in Transition Law provides financial resources for youth in or formerly in foster care. This funding supports youth to have safe and stable housing and to access experiences important for development and successful transitions to adulthood. More information about Extended Care can be found through the Youth Development Program. The rules that direct this program can be found here:

<http://dcf.vermont.gov/sites/dcf/files/FSD/Rules/7000.pdf>.

EXTENDED CARE			
	Case Manager	Eligibility	Description
Completion of Secondary Education	DCF	Youth 18-23, who “age out” of DCF custody	DCF case remains open for up to six months following high school graduation (some exceptions to extension for residential school settings)
Adult Living Program	YDP	Youth 18-23, who leave custody after age 16	DCF case is closed, YDP manages the case, DCF provides stipend to caring adult to support room and board costs
Independent Living	YDP	Youth 18-23, who leave custody after age 16	Monthly rental subsidy for youth engaged in productive activities

Completion of Secondary Education

High school graduation is an important outcome for youth exiting foster care. For many reasons, including placement changes while in foster care, many youth are not able to graduate high school prior to age 18. A Completion of Secondary Education Agreement supports youth to remain in care while completing high school and achieving the goals of the case plan. Family Services Workers, in collaboration with youth, licensed placement providers, and YDP, must complete and submit a Voluntary Services Agreement (VSA) for approval. The Family Services Worker maintains an open case, monthly face-to-face visits, and continues to work with the youth, YDP, the placement provider, and other team members to ensure high school completion and a smooth transition to young adulthood. DCF shall provide substitute care payments for the youth in approved living arrangements at the same rate paid before the youth turned 18. Youth that are over 18 are legal adults and no

 VERMONT DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES Family Services Policy Manual		<h1>160</h1>
Chapter:	Working with Adolescents and Justice Involved Youth	
Subject:	Supporting Adolescents in DCF Custody	Page 11 of 15

longer in DCF custody, but voluntarily choosing to remain in care while pursuing their high school diploma. Participating youth that are over 18 are adults and do not require DCF permission for medical treatment. Releases of information should be revisited and youth should provide consent for provider communication. If youth choose to stop attending school or following through with other parts of the case plan, Family Services Workers shall convene a meeting with the youth and team members to determine if the agreement can continue as written, needs modification, or should be terminated. Per regulations, youth who withdraw or are terminated from this program may apply for re-entry up to the age of 23. No residential programming established after the individual turns 18 is eligible for reimbursement.

Adult Living Program

The Adult Living Program Agreement provides some financial support for caring adults to provide room and board to youth ages 18-23 that are no longer in DCF custody. These caring adults are often the same foster parents that youth live with prior to 18. “Adult Living Partners” can also be kin or other individuals identified by the youth as supportive to them. These agreements are developed by Youth Development Coordinators, with youth and the identified caring adults. Although participating youth no longer have an open case with DCF, Family Services Workers should assist youth with identifying natural supports and housing resources prior to leaving care and ensure that youth and families have information about the Adult Living Program.

Independent Living

Rental subsidies are available to youth ages 18-23 that are engaged in YDP services, living in appropriate, affordable independent living settings, and having regular, sustained income. These agreements are developed by Youth Development Coordinators with youth and their teams and are based on a youth’s budget and plan for incremental self-sufficiency.

Special Case Circumstances

Another Planned Permanent Placement (APPLA)

Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) describes exceptional case circumstances where DCF maintains care and custody of a youth and arranges a living situation in which a youth is expected to remain until adulthood. By federal law, the case plan goal of APPLA may not be used for youth under the age of 16. The APPLA goal should **only** be used (1) for youth over the age of 16 and (2) when other options have been evaluated and are found not

 VERMONT DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES Family Services Policy Manual		<h1>160</h1>
Chapter:	Working with Adolescents and Justice Involved Youth	
Subject:	Supporting Adolescents in DCF Custody	Page 12 of 15

be in the youth's best interest. For youth with an APPLA goal, the division is still focused on achieving permanence.

For each youth who has an APPLA case plan goal, it is required that, for each permanency hearing, the division provide written documentation of intensive and continuing efforts to place a youth permanently with a parent, relative (including adult siblings), or in a guardianship or adoptive placement. This includes attempts to locate and engage relatives not previously involved in the youth's case plan, including the use of search technologies. Operations should be consulted on cases with an APPLA case plan goal.

Preparation for Independent Living

The Independent Living case plan goal is rarely appropriate as it does not achieve permanency or life-long connections for youth. This goal may only be used at the request of the youth and after the Family Services Workers has explored all other options. This goal must be approved by the District Director and Operations should also be consulted. The team members or District Director may consult at a District Permanency Meeting to discuss how a higher level of permanence may be achieved for a youth with an independent living case plan goal. Youth living independently or preparing to should be assisted in developing relationships with a network of caring adults to provide assistance into early adulthood.

Pregnant and Parenting Youth

Pregnant or parenting youth transitioning from DCF custody need the same things that all youth need – safe and stable housing, health care, transportation, and educational and employment resources. However, this type of transition planning should complement and not replace permanency goals. It is critical that when pregnant and parenting youth exit care, they have achieved the highest level of permanency available for themselves and their child. Permanency planning efforts and timelines for permanency must be designed to address the needs of the young parent and child without one being at the expense of the other. If legal permanency cannot be achieved, older youth who are pregnant or parenting should be helped to identify a network of caring and reliable adults who are committed to providing long-term emotional support. For additional information, see related policies section.

Social Security Insurance Review

If youth are currently receiving Social Security (SSA) or Social Security Income (SSI), or they may be eligible as adults, Family Services Workers may contact the Child Benefits Specialist and ask for assistance: Ahs.dcfdschildbenefitsunit@vermont.gov. There are two different types of

 VERMONT DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES Family Services Policy Manual		<h1>160</h1>
Chapter:	Working with Adolescents and Justice Involved Youth	
Subject:	Supporting Adolescents in DCF Custody	Page 13 of 15

benefits for youth: SSA is a benefit from a family member and SSI is for a person with a disability.

SSA: For youth that are receiving an SSA benefit and approaching their 18th birthday, the Child Benefits Specialist will receive a student statement from Social Security. This form verifies whether a youth will continue to be in high school and if youth are disabled and receiving SSI. This form needs to be returned one month prior to youth turning 18. This will continue the SSA benefit through the month prior to the 19th birthday. The Child Benefits Specialist will contact Family Services Workers to complete this process.

SSI: For youth that are disabled, currently receiving an SSI benefit, and approaching their 18th birthday, they will need to do the Continued Disability Review (CDR). The Child Benefits Specialist will receive these documents from SSI and will contact the Family Services Workers with required next steps. The Family Services Workers will need to provide the appropriate medical evaluations and assist the youth with completing the remaining questionnaires. All documentation should be returned to the Child Benefits Specialist at Ahs.dcffsdchildbenefitsunit@vermont.gov. Youth will continue to receive their SSI until the review has been processed.

For youth that are receiving **both SSA and SSI:** They will need to submit a Disabled Adult Child Application (DACA). The Child Benefits Specialist will notify the Family Services Workers when a DACA needs to be completed. The Family Services Worker will need to provide the appropriate documentation and assist the youth with completing the application. All documentation should be returned to the Child Benefits Specialist at: ahs.dcffsdchildbenefitsunit@vermont.gov.

For youth that are **not receiving SSI or SSA** in custody, but could be eligible (for example, previously eligible for SSI benefits but were suspended due to receiving Title IV-E funds), they will need to submit a new application for benefits 180 days prior to the youth's 18th birthday. Family Services Workers need to assist youth with completing the application and gathering the Disability report, Function report, and the authorization to communicate with Social Security. This does not need to be submitted through the Child Benefits Specialist, but the staff can assist Family Services Workers with this process.

Developmental Services Review

Youth with developmental disabilities (including a diagnosis on the Autism Spectrum and/or an IQ lower than 70 points) may be eligible for Developmental Services as adults. If a youth may be eligible, at 17 years old, the Family Services Worker must contact the local Designated Agency for evaluation and coordination. If a youth qualifies for developmental services as a child, Family Services Workers may still need to contact the Designated Agency to determine eligibility

 VERMONT DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES Family Services Policy Manual		<h1>160</h1>
Chapter:	Working with Adolescents and Justice Involved Youth	
Subject:	Supporting Adolescents in DCF Custody	Page 14 of 15

for adult developmental services. Contact the Division’s Residential Services Manager for assistance with this process. These efforts should be summarized in the youth’s case plan and documented in case notes.

Adult Mental Health

Youth with the most serious mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and major depression may be eligible for Community Rehabilitation Services (CRT) which can provide case management, psychiatry, employment, and counseling. If a youth may be eligible for adult mental health services, Family Services Workers must contact the local Designated Agency for evaluation and coordination when the youth is 17 years old. Contact the Division’s Residential Services Manager for assistance with this process. Youth that are not eligible for CRT services may still benefit from mental health services and should be made aware of local resources. These efforts should be summarized in the youth’s case plan and documented in case notes.

Adult/Public Guardianship

With the youth’s team, determine if there is a need for adult guardian. The Family Services Worker may contact the Division’s Residential Services Manager for assistance with this process.

If the youth has a developmental disability diagnosis and there is no identified person that can act as guardian, the Family Services Worker must begin coordinating with the local State’s Attorney to apply for a public guardian when the youth is 16.5 years old. The form can be found here: <http://ddsd.vermont.gov/content/petition-guardianship-services-adult-dd>. The **family** court will order a psychological evaluation to determine eligibility.

When there is an identified person that can act as an adult youth’s guardian, a petition must be submitted to **probate** court when a youth is 17.5 years old.

If a youth is eligible for an adult guardian and is still in high school, the Family Services Worker should notify the Educational Surrogate Coordinator with the Agency of Education to maintain the current Educational Surrogate Parent or to transfer the role to the adult guardian. These efforts should be summarized in the youth’s case plan and documented in case notes.

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Adolescent Policy Requirements (grid)

 VERMONT DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES Family Services Policy Manual		<h1>160</h1>
Chapter:	Working with Adolescents and Justice Involved Youth	
Subject:	Supporting Adolescents in DCF Custody	Page 15 of 15

- Appendix 2: Transition to Adulthood (90-Day) Plan (form)
- Appendix 3: List of Rights (form)
- Appendix 4: Appointing a Health Care Agent (guidance and form)
- Appendix 5: YDP/DCF Roles & Responsibilities (guidance)
- Appendix 6: Letter Template for Official Proof of Foster Care (form)