

**ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION  
ADMINISTRATIVE CODE**

**CHAPTER 660-5-51  
TRANSITIONAL AND INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM AND PLACEMENT  
REQUIREMENTS**

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**660-5-51-.01      Purpose And Youth To Be Served.**

(1) Purpose - DHR has developed these requirements for transitional and independent living programs to help provide consistency in the development and delivery of transitional and independent living services. All persons, groups of persons, or corporations desiring to provide transitional and/or independent living programs and placements shall meet these requirements.

(2) Youth To Be Served - Transitional and independent living programs and placements shall serve Alabama youth, in DHR custody and residing in foster care, who are ready to transition from the dependence of childhood to living independently as an adult. These youth must be at least age seventeen (17) years old for independent living and sixteen (16) years old for transitional living programs and less than age twenty-one (21) years old for either program.. Placements may also be provided to youth who were in Alabama foster care on or after their 18th birthday and have not yet attained age 21 years when the decision is made by the individualized service planning team that the youth needs to reenter foster care.

**Author:** Jerome Webb

**Statutory Authority:** Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 (H.R. 3443) amended title IV, Part E, Social Security Act; Public Law 106-169; Code of Ala. 1975, §38-7-2.

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**660-5-51-.02      General Requirements For Transitional And Independent Living Programs.**

(1) Youth in DHR custody may reside in a transitional or independent living placement only if the program providing the placement is operated by a DHR-licensed child-placing agency or residential child care facility, or a DHR-approved foster family home.

(2) Skill Building Components - Transitional and independent living programs must have components that teach youth the skills they need to live independently. These skills must be tailored to a youth's current level of functioning. Youth in transitional or independent living placements must be provided a realistic living experience in which they can take full responsibility for themselves.

**Author:** Jerome Webb

**Statutory Authority:** Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 (H.R. 3443) amended title IV, Part E, Social Security Act; Public Law 106-169; Code of Ala. 1975, §38-7-2.

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**660-5-51-.03      Transitional And Independent Living Placements Provided By Child-Placing Agencies And Residential Child Care Facilities.**

(1) Transitional living placements are offered through a variety of residential on-campus living arrangements where youth have the opportunity to practice independent living skills with decreasing degrees of care and supervision. Apartment living may also be considered when the apartments are grouped together in what is known as a "pod," and only individuals participating in the program are allowed to live within the pod. A pod must be in a specific location with a supervisor living in one of the on-site units in the pod twenty four (24) hours a day, seven days a week (i.e., 24/7).

(2) Independent living placements use "scattered site housing" which is a dwelling that is typically located in the same town or city where the program provider is located. Scattered site housing, a least restrictive placement type, does not have a supervisor living on-site and may or may not have other independent living placements located near it. Youth desiring to live in independent living placements require careful selection, close supervision, and an exceptionally collaborative working effort between the provider agency's program staff and DHR. Independent living placements shall begin no earlier than a

youth's 17th birthday and no later than six (6) months prior to a youth's discharge from DHR's system of care.

(3) Child-placing agencies and residential child care facilities are responsible for assuring that their transitional and independent living placements meet the applicable minimum standards and these requirements. The State Department of Human Resources is responsible for monitoring child-placing agencies and residential child care facilities to assure that all requirements are being followed.

(4) Transitional and independent living programs shall prohibit roomers, boarders, and persons who are not participating in their program to share housing with youth in transitional and independent living placements. An exception to this requirement is when youth are living in an apartment where the lease can remain in their name after discharge from DHR custody, and a roommate is needed to share expenses to enable the youth to retain the apartment after discharge from DHR custody, and the youth's individualized service planning team approves the plan.

(5) Residential child care facilities are prohibited from using mobile homes as the housing unit for transitional or independent living placements. Transitional living facilities must be in locations that are designated for the unique purpose of transitional living and must allow the residents free access to the exterior.

(6) Program Staffing - Transitional and independent living program staff of child care placing agencies or residential child care facilities must adhere to the Minimum Standards by which their agency or facility is licensed and any applicable governmental or agency rules, regulations, and standards for the purpose of governing agencies that provide care or are responsible for the placement of children. Program staff shall participate in the planning and delivery of services to youth being considered for transitional and independent living programs and placements. This includes participating in the development and revision of a youth's individualized service plan (ISP) prior to admission and during placement.

(a) Program staff must be employees of the DHR licensed child-placing agency or residential child care facility that is providing the transitional and/or independent living program and must meet the following qualifications and responsibilities. Written job descriptions shall be developed for all staff and maintained on site at the child-placing agency or residential child care facility.

1. Program Coordinator

(i) Qualifications - Program coordinators shall be the executive director or shall meet the minimum

qualifications, as prescribed, for the "executive" in the applicable Minimum Standards; shall receive sixteen (16) hours training in "Emotional and Physical Development of Teens," "Development of Youth's Strengths and Assets," and "Positive Youth Development" in addition to the training listed in the applicable Minimum Standards.

(ii) Responsibilities - The program coordinator shall be responsible for working with and supervising other staff who are working with youth in the transitional and/or independent living program; shall work in cooperation with the case manager, life coach and DHR social worker to identify youth who are prepared to enter a transitional and/or independent living program; shall assist the case manager or life coach in locating housing for youth; shall work with youth and case managers or life coaches to help youth develop the necessary knowledge and skills to become independent; and shall provide input on all case plans that are presented to the individualized service planning team and approve all reports or other paperwork needed by DHR.

## 2. Case Manager

(i) Qualifications - Case managers shall be twenty three (23) years of age or older. They shall be a licensed social worker per Code of Ala. 1975, §34 and practicing at the level of a licensed certified social worker (LCSW); or a licensed graduate social worker (LGSW); or a licensed bachelor social worker (LBSW) with continuing supervision from a person licensed as a certified or graduate social worker; or a professional counselor licensed under Alabama law; or a psychologist licensed under Alabama law. Case managers shall be supervised by the transitional and/or independent living Program Coordinator, and shall receive sixteen (16) hours training in "Emotional and Physical Development of Teens," "Development of Youth's Strengths and Assets," and "Positive Youth Development" in addition to the training listed in the applicable Minimum Standards.

(ii) Responsibilities -Case Managers shall be responsible for the direct supervision of youth who participate in a transitional and/or independent program; shall actively participate in the development and implementation of all treatment plans/ISPs for youth in their caseload; shall complete any paperwork as agreed upon through a youth's ISP and/or DHR contract; and shall be responsible for each youth's placement in a

transitional or independent living setting; and shall work with the DHR social worker to monitor and supervise the youth.

### 3. Life Coach

(i) Qualifications - Life coaches shall have a high school degree or general equivalency diploma (GED); shall meet all requirements as listed in the applicable Minimum Standards; shall be at least twenty one (21) years of age; and shall receive sixteen (16) hours training in "Emotional and Physical Development of Teens," "Development of Youth's Strengths and Assets," and "Positive Youth Development" in addition to the training listed in the applicable Minimum Standards.

(ii) Responsibilities - Life coaches shall work shifts and be on-call 24 hours a day on a rotating basis; shall be responsible for the day-to-day modeling of life skills; shall provide activities for youth to practice life skills and provide appropriate feedback to the youth; and shall work in partnership with the case manager.

(iii) Life coach to youth ratio shall be in compliance with the worker to youth ratio as stated in the Minimum Standards for Residential Child Care Facilities.

### (7) Requirements Specific To Independent Living

(a) All youth desiring independent living placements must work full time or part-time, and be involved in a diploma, GED or vocational program. Youth working full time who have received a diploma or GED may participate in independent living. They are required to work with their DHR social worker and the provider agency's social worker or case manager in developing short and long-term goals to be included in their ISP. These short and long term goals will be based on the desired outcomes that support youth in achieving independence.

(b) Additional requirements for youth desiring independent living placements include the following.

1. Youth must submit a weekly budget to their case manager and their DHR social worker prior to moving into independent living housing, and the budget must fall within a youth's monthly income.

2. Youth must submit a plan for rent payments and security deposit prior to the housing lease being signed. Youth may co-sign the housing lease with the provider

agency when they are of legal age (i.e., 19 years). DHR is prohibited from signing or co-signing a lease for housing.

3. Youth may share housing with one (1) other person of the same (or near the same) age and of the same sex. The program provider and the individualized service planning team may grant an exception to this requirement to allow siblings to share housing. This exception is dependent upon each youth's ISP and the availability of housing space for the additional sibling(s).

4. Youth must have their own bedroom regardless of the number of youth who share housing.

(c) Home Furnishings - The child care facility or child-placing agency shall provide youth certain articles and supplies for furnishing their home. The articles and supplies must include a bed and bed linens; a dining table and chairs; living or sitting room furniture; a stove and refrigerator; kitchen furnishings; and a telephone.

1. Independent living program providers shall adhere to DHR's Telephone and Mail Contacts policy. The telephone may be limited to local calling if a "calling plan" or "calling card" is provided for youth to contact parents, relatives, siblings, and other pertinent individuals who live outside the local calling area. Youth may purchase their own telephone and telephone services, but are responsible for any expenses that are beyond the scope of Telephone and Mail Contacts policy.

2. Youth may purchase their own household furnishings if desired; however, the furnishings should be inventoried so that when youth move to another residence or leave foster care, their furnishings can be easily identified from those of the independent living program provider. Items purchased by youth shall be moved with the youth.

(8) Placement Supervision - All youth in transitional and independent living placements shall have twenty four (24) hour access to program staff who are responsible for monitoring the activities of youth in their programs. Program staff shall develop a schedule for providing supervision with guidance and supervision based on a specific youth's maturity, acquired skills, and emotional status. The supervisory schedule will be developed in collaboration with a youth's ISP team.

(a) Transitional Living - The individualized service planning team is responsible for determining the frequency and type of supervision provided to youth living in transitional living placements. Supervision shall be designed so that the team may observe that the youth is practicing healthy life skills. The

program where the youth is placed will schedule supervisory staff and coverage according to the Minimum Standards For Residential Child Care Facilities.

(b) Independent Living - All youth must have 24/7 telephone access to independent living program staff and an alternate placement in the event the independent living placement is unsuccessful.

1. The supervisory schedule for youth during the first eight (8) weeks in placement includes, at a minimum, daily supervision for the first week; twice a week supervision for the second through fourth weeks; and once a week supervision for the fifth through eighth weeks. After the eighth week, supervision must occur no less than once a month and the individualized service planning team must reconvene to determine the level of on-going supervision that is needed.

2. Program staff must contact DHR immediately when significant issues or incidents occur and the issue/incident is severe enough to risk a youth's loss of the independent living placement or the issue/incident creates a danger to the youth. Staff must also contact DHR within two (2) working days when incidents occur that are concerning to the agency/facility operating the independent living program.

**Author:** Jerome Webb

**Statutory Authority:** Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 (H.R. 3443) amended title IV, Part E, Social Security Act; Public Law 106-169; Code of Ala. 1975, §38-7-2.

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#### 660-5-51-.04

#### Transitional And Independent Living Placements Provided By County DHR Approved Foster Family Homes.

(1) Youth who are in DHR custody and residing in a foster family home may be given the opportunity to live in a dwelling, separate from the foster family home, that is specifically designated as a transitional or an independent living placement when the youth's individualized service planning team agrees that the need exists. The dwelling must be assessed and approved by the County DHR as being in compliance with the Minimum Standards for Foster Family Homes.

(a) Youth must submit a weekly budget to the foster family home provider and their DHR social worker prior to moving into the placement, and this budget must fall within a youth's monthly income.

## (2) Physical Setting and Placement

(a) Transitional and independent living dwellings may include, but are not limited to, a mobile home, garage apartment, or other type dwelling. Youth may share housing with one (1) other person of the same (or near the same) age and of the same sex. The foster family provider and the individualized service planning team may grant an exception to this requirement to allow siblings to share housing. The exception is dependent upon each youth's ISP and the availability of space for the additional sibling(s). Regardless of how many youth live in the dwelling, each must have a separate bedroom.

(b) Youth will be under the direct supervision of the foster parent and the dwelling must be located adjacent to or in close proximity to a foster parent's home for a youth's activities to be monitored. The individualized service planning team will determine the amount of monitoring and supervision the youth receives.

(c) The foster family home provider shall provide articles and supplies for youth to furnish the home. The articles and supplies may be new or used, must be in good condition, and must include a bed and bed linens; a dining table and chairs; living or sitting room furniture; a stove and refrigerator; kitchen furnishings; and a telephone.

1. The foster family home provider shall adhere to DHR's Telephone And Mail Contacts policy. The telephone may be limited to local calling if a "calling plan" or "calling card" is provided for youth to contact parents, relatives, siblings, and other pertinent individuals who live outside the local calling area. Youth may purchase their own telephone and telephone services, but are responsible for any expenses that are beyond the scope of Telephone and Mail Contacts policy.

2. Youth may purchase their own household furnishings if desired; however, the furnishings should be inventoried so that when youth move to another residence or leave foster care, their furnishings can be easily identified from those of the foster family home provider. Items purchased by youth will be moved with the youth.

**Author:** Jerome Webb

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**660-5-51-.05      Documentation Requirements.**

(1) Child-placing agencies, residential child care facilities and foster family homes providing transitional and independent living placements shall complete documentation as described in this rule.

(a) Independent Living Intake and Orientation Checklist - Providers shall complete an intake and orientation checklist for each youth who will reside in an independent living placement. The "Independent Living Intake and Orientation Checklist" may be used by providers or they may develop one of their own that includes items on this list.

(b) Personal Safety Agreement (DHR-FCS-2139) - Youth who are planning to move into an independent living setting are required to review and sign the "Personal Safety Agreement." If the youth refuses to abide by the safety guidelines, the placement cannot occur. Providers shall ensure that a new form is reviewed and signed each year that the youth remains in the independent living placement.

(c) Monitoring Sheet For Youth In Independent Living Placements (DHR-FCS-2138) - Providers are required to complete the "Monitoring Sheet For Youth In Independent Living Placements" for each youth residing in an independent living placement.

(d) Monthly Transitional And Independent Living Placement Report (DHR-FCS-2140) - Child-placing agencies and residential child care facilities must complete the "Monthly Transitional And Independent Living Placement Report" for each month that they have youth in a transitional or independent living placement. Foster family home providers are not required to complete this report.

(e) Foster Family Home Approval to Provide A Transitional or Independent Living Placement (DHR-FCS-2141) - This form is completed by the County DHR where the foster family home is located to indicate that the transitional or independent living placement setting meets the Minimum Standards For Foster Family Homes. The approval must be reviewed, signed, and dated by the foster parent(s) providing the placement and by the County DHR Director.

**Author:** Jerome Webb

**Statutory Authority:** Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 (H.R. 3443) amended title IV, Part E, Social Security Act; Public Law 106-169; Code of Ala. 1975, §38-7-2.

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