



## Annual High School Academic Plan Meeting

**WHAT:** The Annual High School Academic Plan (CFS 407 HS) is completed by the Caseworker during the Annual High School Academic Plan Meeting at the start of each school year, August through October. Caseworkers are to convene a meeting where the student's academic progress is reviewed, problems/issues are discussed, and post-secondary planning is begun. The form is to be brought to the youth's next Administrative Case Review.

**WHY:** To ensure that all DCFS youth are prepared for post-secondary education, vocational training, or employment, and that they learn about the Department's programs that support their plans. Academic problems or issues that are identified during this meeting will be addressed, and communication with school counselors, other relevant school staff, and NIU Education Advisors/POS Liaisons is encouraged.

**WHO:** Caseworkers, youth, caregivers, school counselors and other relevant school staff should be included in order to fully address each youth's individual situation and plans. If youth has an IEP, is lacking credits, or has other specific educational issues, a NIU Education Advisor should be invited to participate in the meeting.

### THE ANNUAL HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMIC PLAN • YEAR BY YEAR

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Freshman Year</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review academic progress from elementary school/middle school &amp; identify strengths</li> <li>• Identify possible future goals related to career options and/or academic interests</li> <li>• Review DCFS transitional services for youth 14 and older</li> <li>• Use the Ansell Casey Life Skill Assessment in the discussion</li> <li>• Discuss study habits, and any study/support groups or other supports/resources that may be needed, i.e. tutoring</li> <li>• Identify possible extra-curricular activities</li> <li>• Complete the Education Profile (CFS 407-4)</li> <li>• Complete the AHSAP, including goals for current year, and distribute copies to student, caregiver, counselor, and Education Advisor</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Sophomore Year</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review progress from freshman year: is this youth on track academically?</li> <li>• Acknowledge accomplishments</li> <li>• Identify any educational problems or issues</li> <li>• Review discussion from Freshman year regarding academic and/or vocational interests</li> <li>• Student visit <a href="http://www.careercounseling.com">www.careercounseling.com</a> if needed to clarify career interests</li> <li>• Discuss opportunities for internships, dual credit programs, mentors, volunteer experiences as appropriate</li> <li>• Begin to explore possible post-secondary colleges and vocational programs</li> <li>• Register for PSAT if appropriate</li> <li>• Communicate with school counselor as needed</li> <li>• Complete the AHSAP, including goals for current year, and distribute copies to student, caregiver, counselor, and Education Advisor</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Junior Year</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review progress from sophomore year: is this youth on track academically?</li> <li>• Acknowledge accomplishments</li> <li>• Discuss graduation requirements</li> <li>• Identify any educational problems or issues</li> <li>• Focus on post-secondary goals</li> <li>• Involve the school counselor to identify colleges, universities, or vocational programs of interest; take tours</li> <li>• Notify youth re: <a href="http://www.collegezone.com">www.collegezone.com</a> to gather information related to school options, financial aid, college costs, scholarships</li> <li>• Arrange for youth to register and prepare for ACT/SAT</li> <li>• Complete the AHSAP, including goals for current year, and distribute copies to student, caregiver, counselor, and Education Advisor</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Senior Year</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review academic progress, graduation requirements and post secondary options</li> <li>• Discuss graduation requirements</li> <li>• Review post-secondary options available to DCFS youth, decide which apply for their situation</li> <li>• Give youth a copy of the Get Goal'd brochure</li> <li>• Outline youth's responsibilities in applying for DCFS programs</li> <li>• Finalize list of colleges, universities, or vocational training options and note application deadlines</li> <li>• List out tasks for youth related to college or vocational program admission</li> <li>• Assist youth in completing FAFSA in January of the graduation year</li> <li>• Apply for DCFS Scholarship in January</li> <li>• Complete the AHSAP, including goals for current year, and distribute copies to student, caregiver, counselor, and Education Advisor</li> </ul>



## Community College Payment Program

The Community College Payment Program allows youth under DCFS guardianship enrolling in an Illinois community college the opportunity to have their in-district tuition, fees, and books paid by DCFS if they are not paid by financial aid grants. Payment requests can be submitted for vocational training programs that are part of the community college curriculum. **Requests for out-of-district and prior fiscal years' tuition will not be approved.**

### Eligibility Criteria:

- Must be a youth for whom DCFS is legally responsible
- Must be accepted for enrollment by an in-district community college
- Has not used his/her four semesters of payments
- Maintain a "C" average
- Must apply for financial aid through FAFSA, designating community college to receive funds and complete all requested documentation of school financial aid department. FAFSA funding is to be used before requesting payment from DCFS

### Benefits:

- Payment of in-district community college tuition, fees, and books not covered by financial aid grants for a maximum of 4 semesters; and,
- Services and assistance as required from my caseworker and/or Department Education Advisors

### Caseworker Responsibilities:

- Assist youth with completing school enrollment, FAFSA and financial aid paperwork
- Complete applicable portion of CFS 407-3, review with youth and have youth sign Service Agreement, and provide letter documenting DCFS guardianship to youth. Caseworker must also ensure the youth submits the completed CFS 407-3 form to the community college and is in compliance with the program.

### Youth Responsibilities:

- Submit completed 407-3 form to school for each semester payment is being requested
- Provide letter of verification of DCFS guardianship status to the community college
- Send an official copy of class schedule and grades to caseworker within two weeks after receiving them
- If the youth does not drop classes by drop/add date, he or she will be required to pay the bill

### Payment Request Process:

Community College must submit the completed CFS407-3 along with student schedule, invoice and proof of financial aid status for each semester that payment is being requested to:

**DCFS Community College Payment Program**  
595 S State St., Elgin, IL 60123  
Phone 847-888-7637 • Temporary Fax 847-888-5543

### Direct questions to the Office of Education and Transition Services

Chicago  
312-814-5959

Elgin  
847-888-7637

Springfield  
217-557-2689





## Education & Training Vouchers

### *Resource for Lifetime Achievement*

The Education and Training Voucher (ETV) program assists youth with post-secondary education related expenses not covered by financial aid grants.

#### **Eligibility:**

- Youth for whom DCFS is legally responsible or who aged out of care at age 18 or older
- OR
- Achieved permanency at age 16 or older through either subsidized guardianship or adoption

#### **Benefits:**

- Payment of up to \$5000 annually of education related expenses such as tuition, fees, books, supplies, uniforms, equipment and/or transportation not covered by other grants or scholarships
- Funding available until age 21
- If enrolled in a post-secondary program and student has used ETV funding before age 21 and making satisfactory progress toward completion of the program, funding is available until age 23

#### **Requirements:**

- Attend post-secondary school listed as accredited by US Dept of Education
- Making academic progress
- File FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) annually
- Complete any additional financial paperwork required by the school
- Submit completed application with requested documentation each term

Approval decisions and actual voucher award amounts are determined by the Office of Education and Transition Services (OETS).

#### **Applications and Questions:**

DCFS • Office of Education and Transition Services • 595 S State St., Elgin, IL 60123  
Phone 847-888-7637 • Temporary Fax 847-888-5543



[www.state.il.us/dcfs](http://www.state.il.us/dcfs)



## The Emancipation Decision: Are You Ready?

### What is emancipation?

Emancipation is the graduation stage for those in DCFS care who are prepared to move into self-sufficiency. They are no longer under the direct supervision of DCFS and are free to live in the general community. Emancipation means you are ready to be responsible and take control of your life as a “Mature Youth.”

### Preparing for emancipation

Are you a Mature Minor?

A “Mature Minor” is a person at least 16 years of age but not older than 20 who has:

- Demonstrated the ability and capacity to manage his/her own affairs and to live wholly or partially independent of his/her parents or guardian (Statute No.: 750 ILCS 30/3-2)
- Obtained a high school diploma or GED
- Secured employment
- Made arrangements to continue his/her education

### Transitioning into emancipation

Youth emancipating from DCFS care will no longer have access to or may have difficulty accessing:

- Cash benefits
- A medical card
- Educational supports
- Substance abuse treatment services
- Mental health counseling
- Life skills training
  - Budgeting
  - Health and safety
  - Nutrition
  - Family planning
- Job placement assistance/training
- Caseworker supports

### Are you ready for emancipation?

- Do you have a job?
- Do you have adequate financial resources?
- Do you have a stable place to live?
- Do you have access to medical care?
- Do you have access to educational resources?
- Do you have a support system?
- Do you have sufficient day care resources if required?

## Emancipation services toward reaching self-sufficiency

DCFS will provide the following programs to aid in the transitioning process.

### YOUTH IN COLLEGE (YIC)/VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM

- Ages 16-21 AND youth in care only
- Monthly stipend
- Books (not covered by financial aid)
- Possible assistance with tutoring

### YOUTH IN SCHOLARSHIP (YIS)

- Ages 16-21; youth in care & adoptive & sub-guardianship
- 48 merit-based awards per year
- Medical card & monthly stipend
- Books (not covered by financial aid)
- Possible assistance with tutoring for youth in care

### EMPLOYMENT INCENTIVE PROGRAM (EIP)

- Ages 17-21; youth in care only
- \$150 monthly payment with documentation of Employment or Job Training Program

### EDUCATION & TRAINING VOUCHER (ETV) (Maximum \$5,000 annual award to youth meeting eligibility)

- Possible uses of vouchers: tuition payment, books, housing, uniforms, supplies, transportation, and trade school
- School must be listed as accredited at [www.ope.ed.gov/accreditation/Search.aspx](http://www.ope.ed.gov/accreditation/Search.aspx)

### COMMUNITY COLLEGE PAYMENT PROGRAM

- Ages 16-21; youth in care only
- Up to 4 semesters of tuition, fees, books, uniforms, and supplies not covered by financial aid grants

Caseworkers assist all eligible youth in care with preparation for the following programs:

- Transitional Living Program (TLP)
- Independent Living Options (ILO)
- YIC, Scholarship Program, EIP

**For more information call:  
DCFS Office of Education and  
Transition Services  
312-814-5959**



[www.state.il.us/dcfs](http://www.state.il.us/dcfs)



## Employment Incentive Program

The Employment Incentive Program (EIP) is designed to provide financial and supplemental services to help adolescent youth gain marketable skills through on-the-job work experience or through job training programs. Youth who complete the EIP are equipped with the employment skills and work ethics necessary for a successful transition to independence.

### Eligibility Requirements:

- Be 17 years of age, and not yet 21
- Have a high school diploma or a General Education Development (GED) certificate
- Be under court-ordered legal responsibility of DCFS
- Complete Ansell Casey life skills assessment
- Be involved in job training through a certified job skills training program (e.g., Job Corps, apprenticeship, internship), or be employed for at least one month prior to applying for the EIP and working a minimum of 20 hours per week

Youth living in foster care, supervised independent living, group homes or institutional placements may apply for the EIP

### Benefits:

- Monthly payment of \$150.00 with documentation for a maximum of 12 months or age 21, whichever comes first
- Start-up funding for work-related items (e.g., tools, work clothing, etc.). Funding is need-based and limited to a one-time disbursement of up to \$200.00 with required documentation.

### Referral Information Requirements:

- Employment Incentive Program Application (Form CFS 449-2)
- Current Client Service Plan (Form CFS 497)
- Service Agreement signed by youth and caseworker
- Verification of employment or job training program participation

### For more information, contact:

Chicago  
312-814-5959

Springfield  
217-557-2689



[www.state.il.us/dcfs](http://www.state.il.us/dcfs)

## Youth Housing Assistance Program

DCFS may provide Youth Housing Assistance to help attain or maintain housing stability for youth that the Department currently has or previously had legal responsibility. There are two parts to Youth Housing Assistance: *Housing Advocacy* and *Cash Assistance*, each of which is explained below. Often a client will need housing advocacy services first. Once housing is identified, that same client needs cash assistance. Other clients will not need housing advocacy at all and will simply utilize cash assistance. Still others just need help finding housing and do not need any cash assistance. Call for details.

### Housing Advocacy

Housing advocacy services assist clients in obtaining and/or maintaining stable housing. Services include:

- Assistance in securing affordable housing
- Consumer education
- Budget counseling
- Linkages to community based resources (i.e. assistance with utilities, clothing and food)
- Follow-up services for a minimum of three months after the client secures appropriate housing

Note: Housing Advocacy does not include any money.

**Eligibility:** Youth receiving housing advocacy services must meet all three of the following criteria:

1. Be at least 17 ½ and less than 21 years of age;
2. Be legally the responsibility of DCFS within six months of case closure, or have aged out of DCFS care;  
(Note: Youth that entered adoption or subsidized guardianship after their 14<sup>th</sup> birthday are also eligible.);  
and
3. Have an income that is sufficient to meet rent and utility costs; or be working on obtaining that income. (While housing advocacy can begin before income is in place, it is extremely unlikely that youth will be able to secure housing without sufficient income. Housing advocates can often help with employment.)

### Cash Assistance

Assistance will vary depending on a client's situation. Cash assistance may be authorized for the following reasons:

- Housing security deposit
- Rent (limited circumstances)
- Beds for the client and the client's children
- Current utility bills or utility deposits
- Appliances
- Partial housing subsidy for a period of one year following case closure (housing costs must exceed 30% of income & assistance cannot continue past the client's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday)
- Other items required by the client to avoid or manage a crisis

**Eligibility:** Youth receiving Cash Assistance must meet all four of the following criteria:

1. Be at least 18 and less than 21 years of age;
2. Be legally the responsibility of DCFS and ready for case closure or have aged out of DCFS care. (Note: Youth that moved to adoption or subsidized guardianship are NOT eligible for cash assistance);
3. Have completed a budget statement (Form CFS 370-5C) that demonstrates that with any subsidy and all other income they will be able to cover all remaining living expenses (e.g. housing, utilities, clothing, food); and
4. Need cash assistance in order to attain or maintain stable housing

### Referral Process or Questions

Please discuss this letter with your caseworker. For more information, caseworkers may contact the Youth Housing Assistance Coordinator at 312/814-5571 (Phone) or 312/814-7134 (Fax).

## Youth Housing Assistance Program Frequently Asked Questions

- Q.** I used to be in DCFS care. I am now 21 years old. May I receive these services?  
**A.** No, you are no longer eligible for any of these services when you turn 21, no matter what.
- Q.** Am I entitled to this money?  
**A.** No. This program is based on need, not entitlement.
- Q.** Will you pay for my housing?  
**A.** No, the idea of housing advocacy is to help you find housing that you can afford. For those eligible for cash assistance, we can also help with certain housing start-up expenses, such as a security deposit.
- Q.** I need a job. What can I do?  
**A.** Any Education and Transition Coordinator can assist you in attaining employment by referring you to employment and training programs and services.
- Q.** I was adopted or entered subsidized guardianship. Am I eligible for housing advocacy?  
**A.** Yes, you are eligible for housing advocacy if you were adopted or moved to subsidized guardianship after your 14th birthday. (Note: Housing Advocacy does not entitle you to money.)
- Q.** I was adopted or entered subsidized guardianship. Am I eligible for cash assistance?  
**A.** No, if you were adopted or moved to subsidized guardianship you are not eligible for any cash assistance.
- Q.** Can my husband/wife/boyfriend/girlfriend/partner live with me? What about children?  
**A.** If anyone in your household is eligible for services, we can serve your household, however you define it. We will look at your household income to determine if housing you find is affordable for you.
- Q.** What about roommates?  
**A.** Sometimes having one or more roommates is the best way to make your housing affordable. You may want to consider this option. We will ask some questions about your roommates' income to make sure this housing situation is affordable for all of you.
- Q.** Do you have an apartment I can move into right now?  
**A.** No, we do not have any apartments. Our housing advocates will provide assistance with finding housing on the open market, anywhere in Illinois.
- Q.** What if I don't live in Illinois?  
**A.** First, call your local child welfare office (where you are) and ask for Chafee services. Tell them you aged out of the Illinois child welfare system. If you need help accessing these services, call the number below and we will try to help. If you still need help, but can find your own housing and can afford the monthly rent, we may be able to help you by mailing a check for the security deposit to your landlord. Call to see if this is possible.



## Department of Children and Family Services' Department of Healthcare and Family Services Medical Card

### Qualifications and Procedures

- A child/youth who is in the legal custody of DCFS and placed in substitute care.
- A child/youth in the legal custody of DCFS, who is placed in certain living arrangements on the last day in substitute care may receive a medical extension for a year when returning to the home of parent or upon case closure of the child/youth case.
- Youth, who are age 18 when returned to the home of parent or upon case closure, are eligible for a medical extension up to age 19.
- Parenting youth in the legal custody of DCFS, and live in substitute care, will receive a medical card for their children who reside with them.
- The medical card is valid for one month at a time and is mailed monthly.
- The medical card is mailed to the same address as the financial assistance for the child/youth. Keep those addresses current.
- The medical card goes with the child/youth if a change in placement occurs.

### HFS Medical Card Usage

- The medical card serves as a health insurance card for the child/youth. The card pays for many health care services, including medical and dental exams, immunizations, prescriptions, hospital care, etc. Keep it readily available at all times.
- The medical card can be used only with providers who are enrolled with the HFS and who accept the medical card and HFS payment as payment in full.
- **Out-of-state providers must be enrolled in HFS and accept the medical card and HFS payment as payment in full.**
- Some uses of the medical card may require prior approval. Examples are: prescriptions that are "non-preferred" drugs and some durable medical equipment and supplies (bath lifts, wheelchairs, oxygen, etc.). Contact your physician or pharmacist with questions.
- Non-emergency medical transportation requires prior approval and should be approved through the DCFS regional medical liaison. Service may only be furnished by providers enrolled with HFS who accept the medical card and HFS payment as payment in full.
- If the medical card is lost, immediately contact your caseworker to request a replacement card and/or Recipient Verification Letter.

### DCFS Medical Card Hotline (1-800-228-6533: Monday through Friday - - 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.)

- You should contact the Medical Card Hotline directly if you do not receive a medical card for a child/youth in your care.
- You should contact the Medical Card Hotline directly regarding medical extension eligibility requirements.
- You should notify your caseworker to contact the Medical Card Hotline if the address on the medical card needs to be changed or the child/youth's name and/or birth date is incorrect.
- Providers may call the Medical Card Hotline to verify the correct recipient number and periods of eligibility for a child/youth they are serving.
- A child/youth in DCFS custody should not be charged a co-pay. If this occurs, call the Medical Card Hotline for assistance.





## Project S.O.A.R. Statewide Opportunities for Art and Recreation

### **What is the purpose of Project S.O.A.R.?**

Project S.O.A.R. is designed to provide children in foster care, adoption and subsidized guardianship the opportunity to explore and enjoy a variety of cultural and recreational activities that will enhance their lives. Classes include music, art, media, dance and drama, and are conducted weekly to coincide with the school calendar. These free and exciting classes are held throughout the Department of Children and Family Services' Cook County regions as well as in Springfield.

### **Who is eligible to participate?**

Eligibility for enrollment is limited to youth, ages 3-18, in foster care, adoption and subsidized guardianship.

### **What are some of the classes offered?**

After-School in the Arts	Gymnastics
Ballet	Karate
Black Ensemble/New Directions	Percussion
Children's Choir	Photography
Chorus	Piano
Clarinet	Project Butterfly
Dance Forms	Teen Program
Discover Music/Discover Life	Tumbling
Drums	Violin
Flute	Visual Art

### **What is the registration procedure?**

Registration is by phone only at 312/814-4145, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Registration for the Fall session (Sept. - Dec.) is held during the month of August. Registration for the Spring session (Jan. - May) is usually held in November. Students will be able to register for one class. In addition, the SOAR program has a culminating activity, the SOARING with the Stars event, which is held in May and allows the youth in the program to display what they have learned throughout the year.

### **Is transportation available?**

Transportation is provided based on need, availability, class location and newly-implemented transportation guidelines. Upon registration, please ask for details regarding transportation provisions.



## Scholarship Program

### Eligibility Requirements:

- Open to DCFS youth as well as youth who were formerly in the care of DCFS who are at least 16 years old, but not yet 21 on the scholarship application deadline date of March 31 of the current year
- The Department must have court-ordered legal guardianship for the applicant or the Department must have had legal guardianship for the applicant prior to the adoption being finalized, or the applicant must be in the Subsidized Guardianship Program
- Successfully compete for a full-term DCFS college scholarship
- Maintain at least a "C" average each semester
- Maintain full-time status (12 hours Fall & Spring, 6 hours or an approved internship in Summer). Enrollment will be verified through the National Student Clearinghouse.
- Submit your class schedule at the start of each semester and your grades at the end of the semester (no schedule and grades, no payment!)
- Report change of address promptly to Business Office

### Benefits:

- An award in the amount of \$471 provided each month for up to four (4) years. Direct deposit is strongly recommended.
- Medical card provided to Illinois students until the earlier of four years or age 23
- Tuition waiver available to any Illinois state funded community college or university
- Reimbursement of the cost of books not covered by financial aid
- Education advisors and OETS staff will render assistance as needed
- Benefits available for four (4) years, or the date on which the participant receives a bachelor's degree
- This program is a chance of a lifetime!

### Important Plans To Consider:

- Arranging transportation to the school location
- Planning for housing when school is closed for breaks and holidays
- Devising a backup plan for education finances if your stipend is lost or stolen
- Seeking tutorial assistance through the school, and meeting with your Education Advisor and OETS staff if your grades are low, if you are having problems in a particular course, or if you must withdraw from any classes
- Youth who withdraw from classes must notify the OETS business office
- Apply for financial aid annually.

### What the Scholarship DOES NOT Cover:

- |  |                                     |                 |
|--|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| • Orientation fees   | • Phone bills                       | • Supplies      |
| • Computers or Internet services                                   | • Dorm room damages                 | • Study abroad  |
| • Room/board costs   | • Laboratory fees                   | • Library fines |
| • Repayment of student loans                                       | • Transportation to and from school |                 |
| • Tuition to private, out-of-state or vocational training programs | • Study enhancement programs        |                 |

See reverse side for more details.



## Important Dates

Please mail the following documents to the Office of Education and Transition Services by the following dates:

August 15	Schedule, Summer Grades, Address Changes
January 15	Schedule, Fall Grades, Address Changes
June 15	Schedule, Spring Grades, Address Changes

## Pay Run Dates for 2011

MONTH	MAILING
JANUARY	01/18/11
FEBRUARY	02/16/11
MARCH	03/15/11
APRIL	04/15/11
MAY	05/16/11
JUNE	06/15/11
JULY	07/18/11
AUGUST	08/15/11
SEPTEMBER	09/16/11
OCTOBER	10/18/11
NOVEMBER	11/16/11
DECEMBER	12/16/11

**NOTE: All mailing dates are estimated.**

## Important Phone Numbers

Central Payment Unit	800-525-0499	Education Advisors	815-753-5562
Direct Deposit	217-557-0930	Peoria Business Office	309-693-4988
Medical Card Hotline	800-228-6533	Chicago Business Office	312-814-5959
Youth Hotline	866-459-6884	Springfield Business Office	217-557-2689





## Youth In College/Vocational Training Program

### Eligibility Requirements:

- DCFS must have court ordered legal responsibility for youth.
- Youth must have high school diploma or GED certificate or be enrolled as a full-time student in an accredited university or a vocational training program.
- Must complete the CFS 449 (Youth in College/Vocational Training Program application).
- Must be at least 16 years old and not yet 21
- Maintain at least "C" average each semester.
- Maintain full-time status (12 hours Fall & Spring, 6 hours in Summer, or an approved summer internship). Enrollment will be verified through the National Student Clearinghouse.
- Submit youth class schedule at the start of each semester and your grades at the end of each semester (no schedule and grades, no payment!)
- Report any change of address promptly to the Business Office by fax at 309-693-5433.
- Apply for financial aid every year to cover tuition or room and board costs.

### Benefits:

- Youth may choose to attend an accredited vocational school, four-year college or community college.
- A monthly grant in the amount of \$471 is provided each month for up to four (4) years. Direct deposit is strongly recommended.
- Medical cards are provided to Illinois students until participant reaches the age of 21.
- Reimbursement available for books not covered by financial aid.
- Education Advisors and OETS staff are available for assistance.
- Benefits available until the earlier of four (4) years, or the semester of the 23rd birthday.
- This program is a chance of a lifetime!
- Youth is eligible for a one-time start up funding in the amount of \$200 to be used for initial living expenses.

### Important Plans To Consider:

- Arranging transportation to the school location
- Planning for housing when school is closed for breaks and holidays
- Devising a backup plan for education finances if your grant is lost or stolen
- Seeking tutorial assistance through the school, and meeting with your Education Advisor and OETS staff if your grades are low, if you are having problems in a particular course, or if you must withdraw from any classes.
- Education and Training Voucher Program for expenses not covered by Youth in College/Vocational Training Program.

### What the Youth In College/Vocational Training Program DOES NOT Cover:

- Orientation fees
- Computers or Internet services
- Room/board costs
- Laboratory fees
- Supplies
- Study abroad
- Study enhancement programs
- Phone bills
- Library fines
- Dorm room damages
- Repayment of student loans
- Transportation to and from school
- Tuition

See reverse side for more details.



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JULY	07/18/11
AUGUST	08/15/11
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**NOTE: All mailing dates are estimated.**

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Youth Hotline	866-459-6884	Springfield Business Office	217-557-2689





## The Enhanced Subsidized Guardianship and Adoption Program

To address the permanency needs of children in long-term kinship and foster care, the Department of Children and Family Services implemented the Enhanced Subsidized Guardianship and Adoption Program (ESGAP). This program, an extension of the Subsidized Guardianship Waiver Demonstration Program, is designed to provide an enhanced service package of transition services for a limited group of children who are adopted or for whom a private guardian is appointed at 14 years of age or older.

### Site Eligibility:

Currently, ESGAP is available to children being served by the Peoria Sub-Region, East St. Louis Sub Region, and Cook Central. Effective April 1, 2006, the program became available statewide.

### Youth Eligibility:

- Youth must be assigned to the standard subsidized guardianship waiver demonstration group. Assignments can be found on screen CM24.
- At the time permanency is achieved, youth must meet the eligibility criteria for either the standard subsidized guardianship program or the adoption assistance program. See Rule and Procedure 302.310 and 302.405.
- Youth must also be assigned to the ESGAP demonstration group.
- Children under the age of 14 qualify for ESGAP if their guardianship is transferred or adoption finalized at the same time as that of an older sibling living in the same home, who is assigned to the ESGAP demonstration group and meets all criteria for either the enhanced waiver or the adoption assistant program.

### Assignment Process:

Assignment to the ESGAP demonstration group occurs when a child is:

- 14 years of age or older and not yet 18
- Assigned to the standard guardianship demonstration group

### Benefits:

The enhanced service package includes services that until now have been only available to youth who are being transitioned to independence from the foster care system. The following programs will be available to youth who at age 14 or above are adopted or for whom guardianship has been transferred:

- Youth in College /Vocational Training
- Education and Training Vouchers
- Employment Incentive
- Housing Cash Assistance

The enhanced service package does not include transitional or independent living placement programs.

### For more information, contact:

Chicago  
312-814-5959

Springfield  
217-524-2425





## Promoting Academic Excellence

- ✓ Get involved by attending school activities, parent/teacher conferences and parent board meetings
- ✓ Communicate often with youth's teacher(s) and counselor
- ✓ Assist youth with identifying academic interests, goals, strengths and areas needing improvement
- ✓ Show interest in your child's academic world by assisting him/her with getting organized, inquiring about his day and designating a distraction-free study area
- ✓ Assist with developing time management skills and prioritizing assignments
- ✓ Review completed assignments and assist with test preparation
- ✓ Encourage daily reading to assist with improving reading and comprehension skills
- ✓ Encourage youth to perform his/her best and congratulate all accomplishments
- ✓ Explain standardized exams, support and encourage youth's best performance
- ✓ During the month of March, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders will take the Illinois Standardized Achievement Test (ISAT)
- ✓ Discuss high schools of interest during 5<sup>th</sup> grade, explain that 7<sup>th</sup> grade reading and math scores from the ISAT will determine high school eligibility
- ✓ During sophomore year of high school, encourage youth to begin identifying colleges or universities of interest
- ✓ During junior year of high school, encourage youth to attend college tours
- ✓ Ensure that students register to take the ACT during their junior year of high school
- ✓ All high school juniors must take the Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE) or its equivalent during the Spring
- ✓ During the months of October and November, 12<sup>th</sup> graders should begin sending out applications to college(s) of interest
- ✓ Ensure that seniors complete the Free Application For Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form in January
- ✓ 12<sup>th</sup> grade students should apply for DCFS Scholarship January through March
- ✓ 12<sup>th</sup> grade students should apply for self-identified college scholarships, noting application deadlines
- ✓ Complete all financial aid paperwork at school
- ✓ Attend college orientations once accepted
- ✓ Enroll into the DCFS Youth in College at least 2 months prior to attending college of choice

**Office of Education and Transition Services**  
**100 W. Randolph**  
**Chicago, IL 60601**  
**312-814-5959**



## Freshman Year Check List for Academic Success

- ✓ Attend all classes daily prepared to perform your best
- ✓ Complete and submit all assignments on time
- ✓ Establish good study habits and schedule study time
- ✓ Identify a distraction-free study area
- ✓ Develop a study/support group of your peers
- ✓ Get organized and take good notes while in class, which will assist you with remembering important details when completing an assignment and/or preparing for an exam
- ✓ Review notes daily in order to keep information fresh in your mind
- ✓ Establish positive rapport with your teachers and counselor
- ✓ Get involved with extracurricular activities
- ✓ Meet with your counselor in order to identify career and or vocational options
- ✓ Converse with your caretaker about career options, goals and academic interests throughout the school year
- ✓ Develop an academic plan with your caretaker and counselor and discuss with case manager
- ✓ Challenge yourself academically
- ✓ Identify academic goals for each quarter
- ✓ Secure and actively utilize a library card in an effort to improve reading skills
- ✓ Study, work hard, and do your best to earn good grades
- ✓ Take care of your health, get proper rest, exercise, and nutrition
- ✓ Avoid using tobacco, alcohol, drugs, and engaging in other risky behavior



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## Sophomore Year Check List for Academic Success

- ✓ Attend classes daily prepared to perform your best
- ✓ Complete and submit all assignments on time
- ✓ Maintain good study habits and distraction-free study area
- ✓ Participate in study/support group(s) of your peers
- ✓ Challenge yourself academically
- ✓ Stay organized and take good notes while in class, which will assist you in remembering important points when preparing for an exam or completing an assignment
- ✓ Review notes daily in order to keep information fresh in your mind
- ✓ Establish positive rapport with your teachers and maintain rapport with your counselor
- ✓ Get involved with extracurricular activities
- ✓ Work with your caretaker and counselor in order to narrow down career/vocational interests and communicate this plan with your case manager
- ✓ Seek out professional mentors and/or internships based on your interests
- ✓ Utilize area libraries in order to improve reading skills
- ✓ Identify academic goals for each quarter
- ✓ Begin to explore institutions of higher learning. Inquire about the different types of schools and decide which characteristics about the schools are most important to you
- ✓ Take care of your health, get proper rest, exercise and nutrition
- ✓ Avoid using tobacco, alcohol, drugs and engaging in other risky behavior



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## Junior Year Check List for Academic Success

- ✓ Attend classes daily, complete and tender all assignments on time
- ✓ Maintain good study habits and distraction-free study area
- ✓ Participate in study/support group(s) of your peers
- ✓ Challenge yourself academically throughout the year
- ✓ Maintain consistent communication with school counselor regarding academic progression
- ✓ Maintain involvement with extracurricular activities
- ✓ Communicate career interests with your caretaker and counselor throughout the school year
- ✓ Seek out professional mentors, and/or internships in your area of interest
- ✓ Discuss academic plan with your caretaker, school counselor and case manager
- ✓ Work with school counselor to survey colleges/universities of interest
- ✓ Gather information from colleges/universities of interest, including brochures and catalogs
- ✓ Visit colleges/universities of interest and talk with friends who may know attendees at your college(s) of interest
- ✓ Register and prepare for the ACT/SAT
- ✓ Take the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) and perform your best
- ✓ Attend College and Resource Fairs and begin scholarship search
- ✓ Identify teachers to write letters of recommendations
- ✓ Take care of your health, get plenty of rest, exercise and nutrition
- ✓ Avoid using tobacco, alcohol, drugs and engaging in other risky behavior



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## Senior Year Check List for Academic Success

- ✓ Attend classes daily and submit all assignments on time
- ✓ Challenge yourself academically
- ✓ Maintain good study habits and distraction-free study area at your residence
- ✓ Maintain consistent communication with school counselor throughout the academic year
- ✓ Retake ACT/SAT, if needed, early in the academic year
- ✓ Take the PSAE or its equivalent if needed
- ✓ Complete information-gathering on schools and select between four to six schools to apply to based on your educational goals and interests
- ✓ Send out college applications during the months of September and October, noting application deadlines
- ✓ Apply to vocational programs, noting their application deadlines
- ✓ Attend college resource and scholarship fairs and apply for scholarships
- ✓ Work with school counselors in order to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) in January
- ✓ Keep your case manager abreast of your academic plan
- ✓ After being accepted to your college of choice, attend the orientation session and complete financial aid paperwork at the school
- ✓ Apply for DCFS Scholarship January thru March
- ✓ Enroll in the DCFS Youth in College program at least 2 months prior to attending your college of choice
- ✓ Take care of your health, get proper rest, exercise, and nutrition
- ✓ Avoid using tobacco, alcohol, drugs, and engaging in other risky behavior



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