



Family, Children, and Adult Services Procedure Letter No. 349

TO: Family, Children, and Adult Services Manual Holders

FROM: Kimberly Hall, Director

SUBJECT: **No Aging Out for Foster Youth During COVID-19 Pandemic**

Background:

On March 9, 2020 Governor DeWine issued an Executive Order declaring a State of Emergency as a result of the respiratory disease COVID-19. Additionally, on March 22, 2020 the Director of the Ohio Department of Health issued an order stating, “All Persons Stay at Home Unless Engaged in Essential Work or Activity”.

Youth aging out of foster care are exceptionally vulnerable during the nation’s current crisis. As a result of the pandemic, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) wants to ensure foster youth are not aging out of foster care without secure plans in place to meet their health and safety needs during these critical months of the pandemic. Providing the option for these youth to maintain stability and safety in their current placement setting instead of exiting care should be a priority when possible.

As a state supervised, county administered state, ODJFS recognizes the juvenile courts and the public children service agencies (PCSA) have the authority and best information for determining when a child emancipates from care. These case by case practice decisions, in collaboration with youth, courts, service providers, permanency connections and family, should now include additional considerations for keeping these youth from emancipating during the crisis to ensure they are safely able to transition.

Funding

To support the cost of a child remaining in custody after their 18th birthday, other than children otherwise eligible to stay in custody under IV-E, ODJFS is expanding flexibility of the Multi System Youth (MSY) allocation through June 30, 2020. As outlined in Ohio Administrative Code Rule 5101:2-54-01, this funding is allocated to the PCSAs “to support the costs of care for children in custody of the agency who are placed in congregate care facilities, to prevent the relinquishment of custody to a PCSA for the sole purpose of the child obtaining access to needed treatment, and to provide the services and supports necessary to ensure the child's successful transition from a congregate care facility following discharge.”

Effective as of March 22, 2020 and through June 30, 2020, this funding may be used to cover placement and service costs to support all children who remain in the custody of the PCSA beyond their 18th birthday.

INSTRUCTIONS:

The following chart depicts what materials should be deleted from the Family, Children and Adult Services Manual (FCASM) and what materials are to be inserted in the FCASM.

LOCATION	REMOVE AND FILE AS OBSOLETE	INSERT/REPLACEMENT
PROCEDURE LETTERS		FCASPL No. 349